

Hafa Adai!

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Westlake to build new fire station in San Roque. **PAGE 6**

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HK loses visa waiver benefit

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

Hong Kong nationals used to be able to come to the CNMI using just their passports and without first securing a U.S visa. That is no longer the case after the United States removed the territory from the Visa Waiver Program.

Hong Kong has lost the preferential treatment the United States provides it, following President Donald J. Trump's signing of an executive order on Hong Kong Normalization

See HK on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, July 29, 2020

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	349	2	351
Recovered	291	6	297
Active	47	2	49
Deaths	6*	0	6*
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested	21,465		

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	40	0	40
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested	11,759**		

*Total includes a sailor from the USS Theodore Roosevelt.

**Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Health Care Corp.

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor



File photo shows an HK Express jet as it departs the Kansai International Airport for Hong Kong.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Possible arson at DMS

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
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REPORTER

The recent fire at the Dandan Middle School campus was reportedly possibly an act of arson and the Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services continues to investigate the incident.

According to a statement from DMS, the school was

allegedly hit by arsonists a little before midnight last Saturday, July 25. The culprits allegedly lit the back of the DMS stage storage area on fire, causing severe damage to the tin roof and equipment stored there.

The culprits also allegedly broke three of DMS' surveillance cameras prior to starting the fire.

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CHCC deficit: \$18.85M and counting

» 'Uncompensated care makes up most of CHCC deficit'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

Uncompensated care makes up most of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s huge deficit that has now amounted to \$18.85 million.

CHCC chief financial officer Derek Sasamoto disclosed during the budget hearing of the House Ways and Means Committee and in a board

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\$5M for Yutu vendors

» Joint resolution to access FEMA CDL is approved

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The CNMI would now be able to access at least \$5 million of a community disaster loan from the Federal Emergency

Management Agency after the CNMI House of Representatives adopted a joint resolution that authorizes the Commonwealth to enter into the FEMA loan for

See \$5M on Page 4

Finance Secretary David Atalig appeals to members of the House of Representatives yesterday for the approval of a House joint resolution that would allow the CNMI to access up to \$93 million in Federal Emergency Management Agency community disaster loan.

IVA MAURIN

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Changming Carwash in Garapan is ready to welcome its customers at its new location.

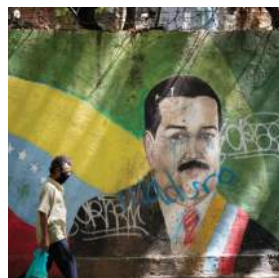
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NATION

Presidential candidate Joe Biden vows to fight racial inequality with an economic agenda.

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WORLD

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, the socialist leader holds a stronger grip on power.

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Local

Jury trial of Mayor Atalig, girlfriend to start Aug. 11

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

After several postponements due to various reasons, the jury trial of Rota Mayor Efraim M. Atalig and his girlfriend, Evelyn Atalig, will finally start at the new U.S. Courthouse building in Gualo Rai on Aug.

11 at 10am.

At a pretrial conference yesterday, U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona and the parties' counsel agreed to have 12 jurors and four alternates.

According to the minutes of the conference, assistant U.S. attorney Eric S. O'Malley

informed the court that the U.S. government anticipates between two to three days to present their case. Defense counsels David G. Banes and Steven P. Pixley expect five to seven days to present their case.

Pixley, who is counsel for Evelyn Atalig, also told the

court that he is going to identify a Chamorro interpreter by tomorrow, Friday.

Manglona appointed attorney Bruce Berline as counsel for Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services Commissioner Dennis James C. Mendiola.

Efraim Atalig had requested the federal court to determine prior to the trial whether Mendiola has a valid basis for asserting the Fifth Amendment privilege if he is called to testify at trial. The Fifth Amendment protects in-

dividuals from being forced to incriminate themselves. The U.S. government did not oppose Efraim Atalig's request.

Mendiola used to serve as Rota DFEMS deputy commissioner. He was among the eight Rota officials, including Efraim Atalig, that the Office of the Attorney General had charged with misconduct in public office before the Superior Court.

The OAG, however, later dropped the case against Mendiola. The Superior Court granted the motion, which means that OAG can no longer re-file the charge against him.

The Superior Court case

was filed over an alleged Republican rally in Guam in June 2018 that Efraim Atalig and others allegedly attended in the guise of a legitimate government trip.

Mendiola is not charged in Atalig's case in federal court.

The charges in District Court against Efraim and Evelyn Atalig involve at least eight trips taken by the couple at different times in 2018 to Guam, Palau, the U.S. mainland, South Korea, and Saipan.

The Ataligs are being charged with conspiracy to commit wire fraud and theft from program receiving federal funds, wire fraud, and theft from program receiving federal funds. Both are also charged separately with false statement.



Atalig

Settlement Fund says it never agreed to withdraw as intervenor in PSS suit

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

The NMI Settlement Fund has asserted that it never agreed to withdraw from the lawsuit filed by the Public School System and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada against Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Finance Secretary David Atalig before the Superior Court, in exchange for PSS filing an amended complaint.

The Settlement Fund pointed out that at the June 26, 2020, hearing before the Superior Court on the Settlement Fund's motion to intervene in the lawsuit, PSS represented to the court that it would file an amended complaint, conceding a number of issues that PSS believed would resolve the Settlement Fund's concerns regarding the impairment of payments due the Settlement Fund under the settlement agreement in Betty Johnson's class action.

In the Settlement Fund's opposition filed Friday to PSS and Ada's motion for summary judgment, Fund counsel Joyce C. H. Tang and Nicole M. Torres-Ripple said PSS has since retracted its representation to the court that it would file an amended complaint, claiming that the Settlement Fund's withdrawal from this case was a condition to the filing of the amended complaint.

Tang and Torres-Ripple said PSS' statement in its July 22, 2020, email that it "compromised" to file the amended complaint in exchange for the Settlement Fund withdrawing from this case is "factually inaccurate and misleading."

First, Tang and Torres-Ripple said, the Settlement Fund never agreed to withdraw from

this case in exchange for PSS filing an amended complaint.

The lawyers said that, as Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho is aware, the complaint, as filed, was deficient and did not reflect the "new" arguments made by PSS at the June 26 hearing.

Second, the lawyers said, in granting the Settlement Fund's motion to intervene, Camacho found "that the disposition of PSS' claims may impair the Settlement Fund."

"Even if the amended complaint were to be filed today, the Settlement Fund contends that, as drafted, its rights may still be impaired," Tang and Torres-Ripple said.

The lawyers said the current posture of this case is that PSS has made "concessions" in its draft amended complaint that correct most of the inconsistencies in the complaint and the motion, but leave two issues unresolved for the Settlement Fund.

One, they said, PSS continues to challenge the constitutionality of all appropriations (referred to by PSS as "earmarks") including the two appropriations to the Settlement Fund under Public Law 20-33 (creating the Settlement Fund Revolving Fund and funding from Business Gross Revenue Tax and Hotel Tax and Alcohol Container Tax to the Retirement Fund). The lawyers said the two appropriations are intended to provide for the Minimum Annual Payments and other payments due the Settlement Fund under the Johnson settlement agreement.

Second, they said, PSS continues to assert that the fiscal year 2020 budget law, P.L. 21-8, is unconstitutional because

it contains eight appropriations that includes the Johnson settlement appropriations laws that should not be treated as special revenue. PSS asserts that they are general revenue and should be included in the computation of PSS' 25% share.

Tang and Torres-Ripple said the Settlement Fund's position is that the Johnson settlement agreement appropriation laws are constitutional and enforceable appropriations, and they are both special and general revenues.

As for the constitutionality of the budget law, Tang and Torres-Ripple said that even if portions of the law are determined to be unconstitutional, the invalidation of a section does not invalidate the entire budget law.

Finally, Tang and Torres-Ripple said, the Settlement Fund has no position on the correct method to calculate PSS' 25% share, so long as it does not impair or interfere with the funding sources for the Settlement Fund.

They said PSS is not entitled to funds appropriated under the Settlement Fund appropriation laws because these payments are constitutionally mandated.

PSS and Ada are suing Torres and Atalig to guarantee for PSS an annual budget of not less than 25% of the Commonwealth's general revenue. PSS and Ada said Public Law 21-08, which established the Commonwealth government budget for fiscal year 2020, appropriated \$37,718,904 to PSS, which is approximately 16% of the budget.

The Settlement Fund moved to intervene in the lawsuit. Camacho granted the motion.

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OMB, OPM, Finance asked about furloughs, extra pay

By IVA MAURIN
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REPORTER

The government-wide furloughs in the midst of exempt employees getting extra pay was the center of an oversight hearing the House Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster Related Funding did last Tuesday on the CNMI government's COVID-19 response efforts.

The Torres administration—represented by special assistant for Management and

Budget Virginia Villagomez, Office of Personnel Management acting director Frances Salas, and Department of Finance Secretary David Atalig—were asked on what they know about any overtime, additional pay, or dual compensation that Cabinet members may have received, as well as the furlough of personnel.

According to Salas, she was tasked to put the list of furloughed employees together, as submitted by the different

departments, and to work with Villagomez to ensure both offices have the “right information,” which she assumed was necessary for the preparation of the budget. Salas disclosed, though, that she noticed alterations on the list during the process of cross-checking with Villagomez. “When I went to OMB to do cross check, I did notice there were some names that were added, and then some names were deleted,” she said.

When asked whether she

knew who made the changes, Salas said, “I don’t know, I’m not sure. ...She [Villagomez] also had this so I basically modified my list to match what she had because I didn’t get any notice from any other department stating that a certain person is removed or called back.”

After the furloughs, OPM, according to Salas, released a memorandum stating and directing all department and activity heads that if they are to recall anyone, an approved notice must be provided, so the department could have an accurate accounting as to who were furloughed or not.

She also agreed that, contrary to what was stated in the letters for furloughed personnel, these employees have the “right to appeal,” given that furloughs of more than 30 calendar days fall under “reduction-in-force” actions, where appeals are warranted.

Atalig, on the other hand, who was asked to explain payments made to personnel un-

der the COVID-19 operations, acknowledged that there were government employees who received dual compensations.

“In the beginning, I was controlling that, and only paid above the [administrative leave] of 64 hours. Anything above that I was allowing. ...in the early stages of COVID-19. After a few weeks passed, [there were] other compensation requests or requests for payments in terms of overtime or additional pay. ...Then I was informed when I started to see the numbers of how much we paid, and those were double pay for all COVID front-liners and everyone that worked,” he said.

He said that there were Cabinet members who received double payments, and added that he did not consult any lawyer prior to authorizing the compensation, or for anything related to COVID-19, other than purchases that needed to go through the Office of the Attorney General.

Atalig said the basis for the compensation was previous disasters, and his understanding of what the Federal

Emergency Management Agency would reimburse, as well as the Public Assistance Office. “I tried to keep that at a minimum, with that understanding of what is allowable and not allowable. If it’s not allowable, and in this case, if it’s not any positions directly involved in the actual COVID-19 mitigation and response, then that is not considered reimbursable to FEMA,” he added.

With \$36 million funding from CARES Act received by the Commonwealth, over \$54 million obligated within the general fund to help with the pandemic, and the \$93 million FEMA funding the CNMI intends to access, the special committee hold it a responsibility to track and carefully review records of expenditures to make sure all funds are optimized.

‘Lack of surge in COVID-19 cases gives ACS completion more time’

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

With a prediction that the CNMI will have a surge of COVID-19 cases by mid-May, the Alternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort in Susupe was meant to be done in 30 to 40 days. Yet because the predicted spike in cases has not happened, that gives the CNMI more time to build the facility.

“At the time we were pushing for 30 [to] 45 days construction because, at the time, they were telling us, ‘You’re going to need all of this ready by this date, ‘You’re going to have 5,000 cases and these many hospitalizations,’ so we pushed as hard as we could,”

said Patrick Guerrero, the governor’s authorized representative.

Guerrero told lawmakers at the House Committee on Federal and Foreign Affairs oversight hearing last July 27 that the revised timeline allowed them to add more features to the ACS. The earliest design of the ACS was that it was going to use ventilators and the quickest way to do that is to use gas cylinders—bring in tanks, connect them to the ventilators, and then bring them back to the Commonwealth Health Center to refill the air. “Now, with more time, we’re looking at purchasing oxygen-producing machines and run-

ning lines so that those lines can actually be available at the bedside now and not have to worry about running out of the air and having to run back and forth between CHC and Kanoa,” said Guerrero.

Two months ago, the Governor’s COVID-19 Task Force and CHC introduced the CNMI to the proposed ACS but it still remains incomplete. The facility was originally set for completion on May 25, which was then moved to May 28. At that time, task force chair Warren Villagomez said that critical medical equipment were still on the way. Now he says the medical equipment are still being put through their paces.

No threat in Guam quake

At 2:23pm yesterday, July 29, 2020, a report of a 4.6-magnitude earthquake occurred 61 kilometers north north-west of Dededo Village in Guam. Currently, there are no tsu-

nami advisories or warnings issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information contact the CNMI State Warning Point at 670-237-8000. (PR)

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Mariana Resort to be primary quarantine site when settled

By JUSTINE NAUTA
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REPORTER

The Mariana Resort and Spa in Marpi will be the primary quarantine site in the CNMI, according to Governor's COVID-19 Task Force chair Warren Villagomez.

Speaking at the Special Committee on Federal Assistance and Disaster Related Funding oversight hearing last July 28, Villagomez said they don't want to promote "cross-infection" with people who have tested positive and

people who have tested negative, as well as the person under investigation, which is why Mariana Resort will be the primary quarantine site.

"Mariana Resort will be our primary as soon as it's all settled and whatever spills over from Marianas Resort will be [at] Kanoa [Resort], because we don't want to promote cross-infection," said Villagomez. He added that the purpose of having two separate places is to separate positive COVID-19 cases from the rest.

Rep. Tina Sablan (D-Saipan) point-

ed out that Mariana Resort was deemed not suitable for quarantine a couple of months ago due to many issues, so what has changed now and why has government and federal funding been used to overhaul Marianas Resort when Kanoa Resort isn't full?

Patrick Guerrero, the governor's authorized representative, replied, "I guess we learned along the way, in the last couple of months, maybe we can pull through and actually run the resort."

He said that in order to run Mariana

Resort, they are looking at executing a management contract to run some operations. "We're still actually looking at executing a management contract to run some operations but, as far as putting the facility...up and running, I guess we...don't need much more than what we put in the first couple of months to get it ready," said Guerrero. The resort has additional air-conditioning units and a fire sprinkler that passed fire inspection.

"I don't have numbers to share with you, but I've done the math over and over in my head, and we would be saving significant cost, if we run that facility," he added. He sees a 75% savings if the government rents another place for

\$100 per room per night.

Guerrero added there wasn't much construction to do, just simple repairs such as fixing a few doors, plumbing, and air-conditioning units.

As for medical equipment, Guerrero says that in the beginning they were expecting over 100 ventilators from the Strategic National Stockpile, but only got 25 portable ventilators that came in suitcases.

Based on the models of the Federal Emergency Management Agency and Johns Hopkins University that the number of projected cases that the CNMI was supposed to have, Guerrero said the CNMI needed over 200 ventilators.

HK

From Page 1

last July 15, soon after the People's Republic of China announced its intention to impose a new national security law in the region that was being touted as a means to clamp down on dissent in the territory, but critics describe as China's attempt to bring the territory under its control.

How this new change will impact Hong Kong visitors to the CNMI remains to be seen. Based on the arrival numbers the Marianas Visitors Authority reported in March this year, a total of 295 visitors from Hong Kong have come to the CNMI so far this fiscal year (covering the period from October 2019 to March 2020). In fiscal year 2019, a total of 2,824 Hong Kong nationals came to the CNMI. Also, budget airline HK Express used to fly to the CNMI. It suspended flights to the CNMI last Feb. 5 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Under the new Trump executive order, Hong Kong would be removed from the Guam and CNMI Visa Waiver Program, where visitors from eligible countries may be boarded without a visa and can have an extended authorized period of stay for up to 45 days, for business, pleasure, or transit, in the two U.S. territories.

"Hong Kong will now be treated the same as mainland China, no special privileges, no special economic treatment, and no export of sensitive technologies," the President said. "In addition to that, as you know, we're placing massive tariffs and have placed very large tariffs on China. First time that's ever happened to China."

Previously, travelers with a connection to Hong Kong were eligible to participate in the waiver program, provided the required documentation is met, i.e., having a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passport, or a British National (Overseas) passport, with a Hong Kong identification card.

Last May 27, State Secretary Mike Pompeo announced that China had fundamentally undermined Hong Kong's autonomy, and reported to the U.S. Congress that the region no longer warrants its treatment as separate from China under the United States-Hong Kong Policy Act of 1992.

On May 29, Trump directed the heads of executive departments and agencies to begin the process of eliminating policy exemptions under U.S. law that give Hong Kong a different treatment compared to China.

Section 1 of the new executive order states that it shall be the policy of the United States to suspend or elimi-

nate different and preferential treatment for Hong Kong to the extent permitted by law and in the national security, foreign policy, and economic interest of the United States.

The executive order is set to amend the regulation at 8 CFR 212.4(i) to eliminate the preference for Hong Kong passport holders as compared to PRC passport holders. In comparison with China, Hong Kong passport holders enjoy maximum visa validity periods, as well as encounter less backlogs, primarily due to China being densely-populated with a high U.S. immigration rate.

As regulations are amended, it is expected that Hong Kong will also be removed from its participation in the Diversity Immigrant Visa Program (or the green card lottery) where the U.S., in an effort to diversify its population, makes available 55,000 immigrant visas yearly, from countries with low number of immigrants.

Aside from the executive order, Trump also signed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act, to hold China "accountable for its oppressive actions against the people of Hong Kong."

"The Hong Kong Autonomy Act... gives my administration powerful new tools to hold responsible, the individuals and the entities involved in extinguishing Hong Kong's freedom," the President added.

costs for the first two months of fiscal year 2019 was over \$1 million, which only covered about 1.5 months of its medical supplies that are needed.

"These are the services provided, costs incurred, supplies consumed and others with no corresponding return. It is a pure loss to CHCC," Sasamoto said. "This condition alone demands high priority for appropriation support."

At the House Ways and Means Committee budget hearing, Sasamoto said that if CHCC gets 50% of the requested allotment, it would "create a tremendous impact for CHCC in terms of meeting liabilities and obligations."

Sasamoto added that CHCC provides services to the Department of Corrections, but DOC hasn't paid. "We send the bills but, unfortunately, the department has not been able to satisfy its obligation," which now amounts to over \$1.8 million, Sasamoto said.

Additionally, CHCC attends to patients with social issues. "For example, patients who have no home to return to for various reasons. CHCC accommodates these patients who occupy bed space and need treatment, which also equates to lost revenue," said Sasamoto.

the services...it's going to be a difficult decision, and those are the kind of choices we have to always make on a daily basis," said Sasamoto.

Esther Muña, CHCC's chief executive officer, echoed Sasamoto. "It's very difficult for us when we're dealing with health. It's always unpredictable," she said. "We may have patients that are really healthy one month, then the next month, we have very sick patients."

Muña added that health care is not cheap, and it's always been a "struggle," since the hospital has to verify if they have adequate supplies such as medical, pharmaceutical, etc., as well as having a medical team, nursing team, especially with staff shortages, to render health care services.

Both Muña and Sasamoto pointed out that CHCC does not turn away patients. Sasamoto added that the Commonwealth Health Center keeps patients no matter their ability to pay, and that CHCC always asks for support every year because it's considered a community issue.

Additionally, Sasamoto says that the \$704,005.44 in local appropriations for fiscal year 2019 was spent on medical supply expenses, but he indicated that CHC's medical supply

ARSON

From Page 1

DMS estimates the damage to amount to thousands of dollars.

DFEMS spokesperson Derek Gersonde said DFEMS is working on getting out a full report on the incident as well as video footage for members of the community to possibly identify the culprits.

Saipan Tribune tried to reach out to Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada regarding the incident but he did not respond as of 6pm press time last Tuesday.

\$5M

From Page 1

as high as \$93 million.

Joint Resolution 21-9, HD1, which the CNMI Senate already adopted last July 16, could provide for \$5 million in funding that the Department of Finance could possibly get within the next month, which will be used to pay vendors that need to be paid for services rendered during Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018.

FEMA currently is only authorized to give up to \$5 million, and an authorization from the U.S. Congress is required to access the remaining \$88 million.

Finance Secretary David Atalig earlier spoke at the House chamber yesterday and informed lawmakers that the administration of Gov. Ralph DLG Torres was informed that FEMA has enough funds available, but that the deadline to request the loan is tomorrow, July 31, to give FEMA a month to review the application.

Atalig also informed lawmakers that the administration has reached out to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) for assistance, who in turn, has already introduced a bill requesting the authorization for the CNMI.

"The CNMI is experiencing an unprecedented downturn in the economy. If we were to look back [and] look at the typical government response to shifts in economic activity, governments undertake what is called the counter-cyclical fiscal spending, which they take in debt to stimulate economic activity in the absence of the standard commercial activity," he explained.

According to Atalig, the close-to-zero traditional economic activity in the CNMI following the lack of international tourist, along with the austerity measures in government spending and

payroll, are aggravating the Commonwealth's economic collapse.

"Our options for reasonable financing to support both the CNMI is mandatory and discretionary fiscal responsibilities are limited," he said.

Atalig also said that the CNMI attempted to enter the bond market in 2019 to float a pension obligation bond to support the mandatory payments to the NMI Settlement Fund, but deemed the rates of interest to be unaffordable. The bond offered was at 8-12% interest, compared to FEMA's community disaster loan, which is at .25%.

"The community disaster loan is based on the U.S. Treasury five-year loan currently at .25%. The rates of the inflation in the five-year term of the loan amounts borrowed have a negative real interest rate, which is unmatched in any financial options we have for financing," he said. "Further, if the CNMI demonstrates a three-year deficit, following the disaster, as we presently anticipate, we can have all or parts of the loan cancelled, along with the related interest, and the loan becomes a grant."

Last month, when Atalig appealed before the Senate for the resolution, he mentioned that the CNMI has a list of vendors that the government still owes, and that the \$5 million would go to them.

If the CNMI is approved for the remaining \$88 million, Atalig sought the lawmakers' blessing on working on a spending plan, for deficit reduction, which was met positively.

"I truly appreciate that you have stated that you will include the Legislature in drafting or coming up with the spending plan," House Ways and Means committee chair Rep. Ivan Blanco (R-Saipan) said, adding hopes for the CNMI to also be successful in terms of getting authorization for the loan at the federal level.

CHCC

From Page 1

meeting with Gov. Ralph DLG Torres, Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios, and Finance Secretary David Atalig that CHCC has managed to boost its revenue from \$30 million to \$60 million annually but, because of uncompensated care, the "huge deficit" of the hospital persists. In fact, uncompensated care is increasing and has reached \$18 million in the current fiscal year.

"We have done a lot to grow resources, but the shortfall still exists," he said.

Sasamoto also mentioned the unfunded medical services CHCC provides to government agencies, as well as the central government owing CHCC \$9.6 million for fiscal year 2019 appropriations. This comes as Sasamoto also expressed concerns that CHCC has not been getting its monthly allotments.

According to Sasamoto, more than 90% of CHCC expenditures are for hospital services. "Over 90% of what we spend goes straight into services, straight into the hospital, and we can prove that. ...So to take away from

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Westlake to build new fire station in San Roque

By **KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA**
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REPORTER

The Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services recently entered into an agreement with Westlake Motors to begin the construction of a brand-new fire station in San Roque after nearly five years since the destruction of the station following Typhoon Soudelor in 2015.

According to Department of Fire and Emergency Medical Services spokesperson Derek Gersonde, Westlake Motors' Tom Liu met with DFEMS Commissioner Dennis C. Mendiola last July 1 to finalize the agreement for the new fire station and to discuss the planning, permitting, and construction phases.

Westlake recently signed a public land lease to lease



The San Roque fire station is a sorry sight nearly five years since the destruction of Typhoon Soudelor in 2015.

KIMBERLY BAUTISTA

the land surrounding the former fire station. In return for the lease, Westlake agreed to build the new fire station in the north with a public benefit value of \$500,000.

Gersonde said the groundbreaking for construction is

Congress holds hearing on voting rights in territories

In an historic first, the House Administration Committee's Subcommittee on Elections held a hearing yesterday addressing the denial of voting rights in U.S. territories.

Members of Congress representing the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Northern Mariana Islands all testified in support of expanding voting rights to include the nearly 4 million citizens who live in U.S. territories—98% of whom are racial or ethnic minorities.

Also testifying was Neil Weare, president of Equally American, the only civil rights organization that advocates for residents of U.S. territories; Dr. Gwen Moolenaar, president of the League of Women Voters for the Virgin Islands; and retired Virgin Island educator Gerard Emmanuel. Many

individuals from the territories also submitted written testimonies.

"The ongoing disenfranchisement in U.S. territories is particularly concerning because of the undeniable connection it has to issues of race. We cannot ignore the fact that by silencing citizens in the territories, we are silencing Americans who have long faced racism, systemic bias, and racial exclusion," Weare testified. "We ask Congress to act so that citizens in the territories can finally vote and have their voices heard. It is the right thing to do, the moral thing to do, and in 2020, it is long overdue."

The hearing may be viewed in its entirety at <https://cha.house.gov/committee-activity/hearings/voting-rights-and-election-administration-us-virgin-islands-and-other>. (PR)



WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Happy 11th wedding anniversary to our Mommy and Daddy and happy first birthday to our *magas*, Leonidas Drei. Love, Alyson, Cha, and Leon.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

anticipated for December 2020 and completion of the new Fire Station 6 in San Roque is expected in 2022.

Typhoon Soudelor devastated the island of Saipan on Aug. 2, 2015, leaving many homes, businesses and buildings destroyed. One of those buildings was the San Roque Fire Station 6. At that time,

former DFEMS commissioner Claudio K. Norita met with the Department of Public Lands and Westlake Motors' Liu regarding the negotiations for the land lease for the property where the damaged San Roque fire station is located.

The fire station has been inoperable after Super Typhoon Soudelor.

Picnic tables, benches along Beach Road to be repaired

The Saipan Mayor's Office and 500 Sails are teaming up to fix the concrete picnic tables and benches along Beach Road.

500 Sails secretary and co-founder Emma Perez said that a number of the concrete picnic tables and benches along the Froilan C. Tenorio Beach Pathway are in states of disrepair due to the devastation of Super Typhoon Yutu in 2018 and Typhoon Soudelor in 2015.

"We have been a recipient of the Administration Native American funds. We had a three-year grant...to build, swim, sail canoes, and, when the typhoon hit, ANA wanted to help the community. So we stepped in to do our part for the community, which this project with the mayor's office is one of them," said Perez.

Saipan Mayor David M. Apatang is grateful to 500 Sails and the contractor. "All these benches and picnic tables were damaged by the typhoons. They are very dangerous for our community that spend their time along

the beaches and pathway. With the generosity of the 500 Sails, we worked together and decided to fund this project," Apatang said.

The contractor, Soudelor Corp., will fix the concrete picnic tables and chairs between July 28 and Aug. 30. "It takes about almost 30 days to complete this project," said Apatang.

Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality administrator Eliceo Cabrera also thanked 500 Sails for pursuing this initiative to fix the concrete picnic tables and chairs. "I'm glad they are [using] their funding to beautify our island for our people, I congratulate them for the donation to the Saipan Mayor's Office."

"We hope that, after this completed project, the community takes good care of [the concrete benches and tables]. It is for everybody to be used during your visits along Beach Road," added Apatang.

Apatang also reminded the public to stay away from the construction area for everyone's safety. (Chevy Alipio)


**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
CNMI GOVERNMENT**


INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: DPW20-ITB-020
SUBMISSION DATE: August 28, 2020 TIME: 10:00 A.M.

**"Renovation of Government House
No. 1343 Capitol Hill, Saipan"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE TECHNICAL SERVICES DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, LOCATED ON SECOND FLOOR, OLEAI JOETEN COMMERCIAL CENTER, SAN JOSE, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

A non-refundable payment of **One Hundred Dollars (\$100.00)** is required for each set. Payment must be made to the CNMI Treasurer and a receipt of payment must be presented when obtaining the Scope of Work at DPW Technical Services Division required for each set.



There will be a **Pre-bid Conference** for this project on **August 18, 2020, 9:00 a.m.** local time at the **Project Site Government House No. 1343, Saipan**. The Prospective bidders are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the site. All question regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on **August 24, 2020** to **Mr. Anthony A. Camacho, Director of Technical Services Division**, 2nd Floor, Oleai Joeten Commercial Center, Saipan or fax to (670) 234-3547. Response to questions shall be shared with prospective bidders.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ JAMES A. ADA
SECRETARY, DPW

/S/ ROBERT H. HUNTER
ACTING SECRETARY OF DCCA

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S


**PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT**


INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB20-JUDICIARY-099
SUBMISSION DATE: AUGUST 13, 2020 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

**"TILING PURCHASE AND TILING SERVICES FOR THE
GUMA' HUSTISIA. A PROJECT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT
OF FINANCE, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY"**

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENSION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****MUST USE A FACE MASK BEFORE ENTERING THE OFFICE****

A **MANDATORY PRE-BID MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR 10:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME, AUGUST 05, 2020** AT THE GUMA' HUSTISIA ASSEMBLY HALL.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB SHALL BE DIRECTED TO **MR. GERALD WEAVER, BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT**, VIA EMAIL TO gerald.weaver@nmijudiciary.com ON OR BEFORE **THE CLOSE OF BUSINESS, AUGUST 06, 2020**. ALL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

/S/ DAVID DLG. ATALIG
SECRETARY OF FINANCE

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S

/S/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

**BE TO CORPORATION
JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT**
Sales Manager (Saipan, MP)

Maintain responsibility for performance of all sales activities within an assigned territory; Establish and strategically build a solid customer base; Analyze the sales process in an effort to refine and improve its success and establish sales reporting framework; Achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction with all customer interaction. Req: Bachelor's degree in Business Administration; Must have taken a course of "Strategic Management" and "Business Finance". Send Resume & Transcript to BE TO CORPORATION. ATTN: Young Ki LEE, P.O.BOX 7670 SVRB Saipan, MP 96950.


Employment Opportunities

Greenskeeper Supervisor: Must have 3 to 5 years-experience at a golf course with supervisory experience. You must be knowledgeable in maintaining greens, also dependable and able to motivate a crew. Also, scheduling and issuing daily assignments. Salary negotiated with experience.

Accounting Clerk also needed.

These positions include health and vacation benefits and increase after a 90-day probationary period. US citizens only.

To apply: Drop off résumé at the accounting office of Saipan Vegas Resort (next to McDonald's Middle Rd) Office located at the left side of property (white house with blue trim).

The 20th summer Eco Camp will run at the Marianas Trekking Adventure Center in Marpi beginning Aug. 3. Camp will be held in one-week sessions.

"After consultation with the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, we are happy to announce that Eco Camp will

start this summer with a range of mostly outdoor activities," said Jojo Valencia, Marianas Trekking manager. "We are going to do a lot of outdoor activities, the kids really love driving the go-karts, and we are going to spend time in the ocean, and go on some cool hikes. It should be a really fun

experience for kids."

Camp activities include hiking, snorkeling, kayaking, go karting, field trips, off-roading, arts and crafts, golf driving range, and slideshow creation.

Eco Camp is designed for children between the ages of 6 and 14.

Reservations can be made in person at the Marianas

Eco Camp starts Monday

Trekking Adventure Center or by calling 323-8735, or at marianastrekking.com.

People are encouraged to sign up at marianastrekking.com. Camp participation is limited to 25. Camp is priced at \$100 per week and camp runs from 8:30am to 12:30pm and includes lunch. **(PR)**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marianas Trekking is the pioneer of adventure tours on Saipan. The company offers mountain biking, hiking, kayaking, off-roading, go-karting, eco camp, and SUP adventures on both Saipan and Guam.

CARES Act funding now available for child care providers in Guam

HAGATÑA, Guam—Child care centers will soon be receiving much-needed federal assistance through a grant opportunity identified under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act.

The Department of Public Health and Social Services will be issuing a notice of funding opportunity for eligible subrecipients of federal funding under the COVID-19

» **Grants of up to \$100K to be awarded to eligible applicants**

have a thriving economy," said Guam Gov. Lou Leon Guerrero. "As we continue to face unknowns in the COVID-19 pandemic, and as we slowly work toward recovery, I hope these funds will help to mitigate any losses the child care community may have felt during the COVID crisis. I want them to know that our administration remains committed to finding solutions that will balance the safety of our people and the recovery of our economy."

CARES Act Child Care and Development Fund, Supplemental Funding Grant Award by the U.S. Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.

Each subaward opportunity will be made in an amount of up to \$100,000.

"Child care and day care centers are a cornerstone of our community, providing a critical service to working families everywhere. Without them, we could not possibly

Eligible subrecipients include all licensed child care providers and license-exempt providers who have completed Child Care and Development Program requirements, who may or may not currently have enrolled CCDF families, and who are currently closed or reopened. There are currently 47 impacted licensed child care providers in Guam.

"We encourage all child care providers to apply for this grant opportunity and other providers who feel they may be eligible. We understand that these are challenging times and our team at Public Health and Social Services is dedicated to helping the people and families it serves," said Art San Agustin, acting DPHSS director.

Application packets will be available beginning July 31, 2020, and the deadline to apply for the HHS-ACF CCDF discretionary subgrant is Aug. 31, 2020. For more information on how to apply, visit the DPHSS office, Division of Public Welfare, Bureau of Management Support, CCDF Office, 130 Castle Mall, University Drive, Suite 15, Mangilao, Guam, 96913, between the hours of 8am and 5pm, Monday through Friday, except holidays. You can also email childcare@dphss.guam.gov to request for an application packet. **(PR)**

Over \$273M grants to 184 airports in 41 states, 6 territories

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The U.S. Secretary of Transportation will award more than \$273 million in airport safety and infrastructure grants through the Federal Aviation Administration to 41 states and the District of Columbia, American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Marshall Islands, Palau, and Puerto Rico.

"This \$273 million federal investment in our nation's airports will strengthen safety, improve travel, generate jobs, and benefit local communities," said Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao in announcing the re-

lease of the grants yesterday.

A complete PDF listing of grants and an interactive map of the airports that will be receiving funding is available on the FAA website.

The total includes

just over \$242 million from the Airport Improvement Program and \$31 million in Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act grants to equal a 100% federal share.

"The safety of our nation's airports is of paramount importance to the FAA," said



Chao

FAA administrator Stephen M. Dickson. "These grants will allow these necessary projects to continue."

The grants will be used for a variety of critical infrastructure and safety projects.

The projects include purchasing aircraft rescue and firefighting equipment, constructing runways and taxiways, repairing runways and taxiways, installing aircraft lighting and signage, conducting airport master plan studies and installing airport perimeter fencing. **(PR)**



Northern Marianas Humanities Council

Navigating the Human Experience

Vacancy Announcement

PROGRAM OFFICER Northern Marianas Humanities Council

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council (Council) is looking for a dynamic and enthusiastic team player for the position of Program Officer. The Program Officer works creatively to develop and implement a variety of humanities programs and events and manages the Council's Community Grants program. A detailed description of the Program Officer's duties and responsibilities may be obtained from the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai or from the Council's website at www.nmhccouncil.org.

Applicants for this position are expected to demonstrate: (1) cultural competencies and inclusiveness in communications and program implementation; (2) ability to prioritize and undertake multiple, diverse activities and programs; (3) flexibility and willingness to respond to stakeholders and special assignments to meet project goals and organizational needs; (4) strong analytic skills for identifying issues and solutions; (5) ability to lead a team and work in a collaborative environment; (6) exceptional organizational skills and attention to detail; and (7) strong writing and communication skills.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree, preferably in the humanities; and relevant experience in program and event planning, assessment and evaluation, and grants management. The salary range is from \$35,000 to \$40,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits are set forth in the Council's Personnel Policy Manual and include vacation leave, sick leave, personal days, health insurance and IRA contributions.

Interested individuals are invited to send an application package including: (1) a Letter of Interest; (2) a detailed resume; (3) a recent writing sample (500-800 words; preferably on a humanities topic); (4) three Letters of Recommendations; and (5) names and addresses of three references to Leo Pangelinan, Executive Director, Northern Marianas Humanities Council, PO Box 506437, Saipan, MP 96950. Complete application packages must be received by Council staff on or before 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 4, 2020. For more information about this employment opportunity please contact Council staff at 235-4785.

The Northern Marianas Humanities Council is an equal opportunity employer.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CUC-RFP-20-006

Archaeological Services for S19-068 Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) & W19-070 Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed proposals from Archaeologists or firms that meet the U.S. Department of Interior qualifications (36CFR61) to create a work plan, to prepare information, data and documentation needed to conduct Section 106 Review of the National Historic Preservation Act for FY19 for the construction of a sewerline replacement in Lower MIHA & the construction of a waterline replacement in San Antonio, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

This project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval of the USEPA.

The projects have been broken down into the following detail:

S19-068 Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) – This project proposes to install approximately 700 linear feet of new 8-inch gravity sewer pipe in order to abandon an existing collapsed sewerline that was installed on private property. The project includes the installation of new manholes and the reconnection of existing sewer service laterals to the new sewer main.

W19-070 Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement – The project aims to upgrade and replace the existing ACP distribution main in San Antonio Village. This project will install about 2.1 miles of new 6-inch distribution main and .50 miles of 4-inch distribution main. The project will also include the replacement of all fire hydrants, gate valves, relocation and reconnection of existing service laterals, installation of new flush hydrants, air release valves, and asphalt road restoration.

The scope of Archaeological Services will include, but not be limited to:

1. Conducting the necessary research and fieldwork that represents a reasonable and good faith effort to identify historic properties, to include archaeological resources, as set out in the regulations 36 CFR § 800.4(b)(1):
 - a. Background research design and work plan;
 - b. Archival background information;
 - c. Sample field investigation, and field survey;
 - d. Past planning, research and studies;
 - e. The magnitude and nature of the undertaking;
 - f. The degree of federal involvement;
 - g. The nature and extent of potential effects on historic properties within the APE;
 - h. The likely nature, identification and location of historic properties within the APE; and,
 - i. Create a mitigation plan to resolve adverse effects.

2. Preparation of the necessary reports and letters for submittal to various federal and local resource agencies to address environmental requirements of Section 106 to completely secure concurrence for the projects ready for construction.

3. Deliverables
 - a. 2 copies of the final report for review and approval to HPO and CUC, and
 - b. Map showing the location of identified historic properties which would assist with alignment of the new waterline and sewerline to avoid such properties.

The RFP package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$100.00 for one RFP package set.

One (1) original and five (5) hard copies of the PROPOSAL must be submitted in a SEALED ENVELOPE marked "CUC-RFP-20-006: Archaeological Services For Construction of Island Wide Sewerline Replacement (Lower MIHA) & Construction of San Antonio Waterline Replacement" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **August 14, 2020 at 10:00 AM (ChST)**. Late submissions and conditional proposals will not be considered.

Discussions may be conducted with responsible proposers who submit proposal determined to be reasonably susceptible of being selected for award for the purpose of clarification and to ensure full understanding of and responsiveness to solicitation requirements. All proposers shall be accorded fair and equal treatment with respect to any opportunity for discussion. During discussions, there will be no disclosure of any information derived from the proposal submitted by competing proposers.

All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposer due to lack of information or understanding of the RFP requirements in the course of proposer's preparation of the RFP under the contract. The RFP does not commit CUC to award a contract, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation of the RFP under this request, or to procure or contract for services. Proposers are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This RFP and the ensuing contract shall be executed as per the CUC Procurement Regulations.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered prospective proposers and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on July 27, 2020** to Manny B. Sablan, CUC Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org with a copy to Nicolette Villagomez, Water/Wastewater Engineer, via email address nicolette.villagomez@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all proposals for any reason and to waive any defects in said RFP, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All proposals shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLON
Purchasing Administrator

Opinion

Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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EDITORIAL

War is not a game

War is not a game. But impressionable kids may not be able to tell the difference if the U.S. military continues its esports recruitment.

The U.S. Army, Navy and Air Force have all launched esports teams and have been using popular video game streaming websites, such as Twitch, to drum up recruitment. Active and reserve personnel have been hopping online to stream themselves playing video games and, in the process, talk with viewers about a range of topics, including the opportunities afforded by military service. Recruit numbers have been down, and the military is turning to modern platforms to expand its reach.

But the military's esports teams quickly found themselves embroiled in controversy. Automated links would drop into the army's Twitch chats that told viewers they could win a premium Xbox controller in a giveaway. But these links reportedly took viewers to a recruitment webpage with no reference to any contests or giveaways.

When one considers that a large portion of Twitch users are underage, primarily 13- to 17-year-old boys who may just want a nifty video game controller, and that military recruitment of people under 18 is illegal, what the military is doing raises numerous red flags.

What's more, both the Army and Navy esports operations have been accused of violating some users' freedom of speech rights after banning those who posted questions about war crimes committed by the United States. The American Civil Liberties Union and the Knight First Amendment Institute have both stated that these bans likely violate the First Amendment and should be reversed immediately.

Due to the controversy, the Army unceremoniously suspended its efforts to recruit via Twitch. Meanwhile, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., recently introduced an amendment to a House Appropriations bill that would ban the military from using video game streaming sites for recruitment, calling the strategy "irresponsible."

Whether the practice is ended voluntarily or by legislation, the military's Twitch experiment should be shuttered for good. While military service is a noble and patriotic act, conflating that service with the bloody theatrics of violent video games is a recipe for disaster. Throw in phony giveaways, marketing to children and violations of the First Amendment, and it is clear the military should figure out a better way to modernize recruitment.

(c) 2020 Pittsburgh Post-Gazette



COVID-19 adds to the problem of drug-resistant antibiotics

As the world grapples with COVID-19, another pandemic has gone mostly unnoticed.

Each year, 700,000 people—including as many as 160,000 Americans—lose their lives to antibiotic-resistant bacteria. My 18-month-old son Simon was one of them. He woke up one morning screaming in agony. Within 24 hours, he died from a drug-resistant infection that doctors were powerless to stop. Had effective antibiotics been available, he would still be with us today.

Jump-starting research into these medicines—whether through government grants or private initiatives—needs to be a national priority. Without such efforts, millions of families will suffer the horrible loss ours did. Antimicrobial resistance, or AMR, the phenomenon by which bacteria and fungi evolve and become immune to drugs, could kill 10 million people annually by 2050.

Worryingly, the antibiotics needed to avoid this crisis aren't being developed.

While progress in everything from cancer treatments to HIV medications has taken off in recent years, work on new antibiotics has essentially stalled. The FDA approved only nine new antibiotics between 2000 and 2018. That's down from 63 between 1980 and 2000.

This lack of new antibiotics has allowed the kinds of drug-resistant bacteria that took Simon's life to evolve and multiply, mostly unchecked. Years of antibiotic overuse have exacerbated this problem. Every time someone takes an antibiotic that they don't need, it gives bacteria a chance to develop resistance. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that a third of antibiotic prescriptions are unnecessary.

And now, the novel coronavirus is making matters worse. During the early days of the outbreak, antibiotic prescriptions spiked as doctors struggled to treat what was then a mysterious illness. Currently, secondary bacterial infections resulting from getting sick with COVID-19 are also on the rise. In other words, COVID-19 has added fuel to an AMR pandemic that has been raging for years.

Without urgent action, we could soon live in a post-antibiotic society. So why isn't the drug industry creating these vital medicines? Economics. The simple math of drug development makes it exceedingly difficult to create new antibiotics. New drugs are enormously expensive to develop.

For many medicines—a breakthrough arthritis treatment, for instance, or a new multiple sclerosis therapy—this investment is generally worth it, since companies can recoup that investment and turn a profit by selling the drugs in large volumes. Not so

By EVERLY MACARIO
Chicago Tribune

Everly Macario, Sc.D., M.S., Ed.M., supported the founding of the MRSA Research Center at The University of Chicago Medicine. She also served as a spokesperson for Supermoms Against Superbugs.



with antibiotics. In fact, since antibiotics are supposed to be used as infrequently as possible, firms that invest in antibiotics will sell relatively few doses—and thus stand virtually no chance of even recouping development costs. As a result, many antibiotics research firms have either run out of money or have simply abandoned the research altogether.

Last year, two promising antibiotic startups, Achaogen and Aradigm, declared bankruptcy. Just three major drug companies are currently investing in antibiotics, down from 18 in the 1980s.

But for the first time in years, there is real hope on the horizon. A new initiative from the world's leading biotech and pharmaceutical firms—the "AMR Action Fund"—has committed \$1 billion to accelerate the development of new antibiotics. The fund will directly invest in early and mid-stage experimental antibiotics, providing funding for the sorts of lifesaving treatments that could have saved my son. This is a phenomenal start. But \$1 billion isn't enough to defeat the AMR crisis. It only buys us a few years, at most.

Unless we change the foundational structure of antibiotic development—something that can only be done by our elected leaders in Washington with smarter government policies—firms will eventually abandon this field. That'd be an understandable decision at the individual company level, but an unspeakable tragedy for society as a whole. The government, for example, can pass legislation that provides financial incentives to develop brand new antibiotics.

I am still coming to terms with the sudden death of my beautiful, healthy little boy. It simply didn't make sense that modern medicine couldn't save him from a simple bacterial infection. That's why I've become so passionate about this cause. I don't want any other mothers to endure this hellish experience. So long as we take bold action now to catalyze antibiotics research, they won't have to.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

A right-wing fantasy comes true

It wasn't all that long ago when the right-wing conspiracy theorists were insisting that Barack Obama was plotting to enact martial law, commandeer farm land and food supplies and lock up his political enemies in concentration camps run by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Fox News' Glenn Beck and the martial arts actor Chuck Nor-

ris were all over it and thousands of their followers came to believe it was absolutely true.

Then there were the stories in 2015 that a military training exercise being planned in remote areas in Texas that included special forces like the Green Berets and Navy Seals was an elaborate plot by Obama to take over the Lone Star state.

The right-wing internet sites were filled daily with details on how Obama was going to pull off this elaborate and audacious scheme, detaining law-abiding Texans in Walmart stores that had recently been closed—all part of the plot, of course. Who knew that the ultraconservative Walton family would be in on this dirty deed?

It wasn't just the nut cakes on the fringe who were sure this was going to happen. Polls found that a full 32% of Republicans in Texas believed the conspiracy and, just to be sure, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott sent his National Guard troops to keep an eye on the exercise.

Years before Obama, the NRA's often-unhinged leader Wayne LaPierre insisted that President Bill Clinton, another devious liberal, was planning to send "jack-booted thugs" to confiscate Americans' guns. Then there were those who insisted that "black helicopters" were hovering to secretly snatch political opponents and whisk them to who knows where.

Surely, no one knew then that the president who would really send a secret force of camouflaged federal agents in unmarked cars into the streets of American cities would be one of their own.

As New York Times columnist Paul Krugman recently pointed out, "Every right-wing conspiracy theory about President Obama was an indication of what Republicans wanted to do themselves, and would do once they had the power."

The federal force that was sent uninvited in early July to Portland, Oregon, to ostensibly shut down "violence" in front of the city's federal courthouse, has been condemned for its disregard

Joe Biden's shockingly adequate campaign

By **RICH LOWRY**

King Features Synd., Inc.



Rich Lowry is editor of the National Review.

The Biden campaign has been lucky most of all, but it's also been smart, at least smart enough.

To go, as Joe Biden did, from left for dead to sweeping to the Democratic nomination and quickly thereafter emerging as the favorite in November is a run of success that would be the envy of any national politician.

It's easy to consider this a mere accident given the weakness of Biden's opponents, first a socialist in the Democratic primaries who had a ceiling on his support and now an incumbent president whose ratings have sagged.

The Biden team certainly isn't going to rewrite any campaign playbooks or dazzle anyone with its brilliance, but it has avoided serious mistakes and demonstrated an understanding of the basic political terrain and its candidate's strengths. It hasn't asked Biden to do anything out of his comfort zone or beyond his capabilities and has been content for President Donald Trump to dominate all the attention, so long as Trump is not advancing his cause, and often setting it back, with all the airtime and headlines.

Above all, the campaign has avoided the most politically perilous ideological excesses throughout. This has required some discipline, given how influential woke Twitter is on the left.

Biden's theory of the Democratic Party, even if it seemed doubtful at the outset, proved correct—that the center of gravity of the party was still with, as he put it, Obama-Biden Democrats rather than with the avowed socialists and social justice warriors.

Biden hewed to this line when other candidates went the other way. It might seem obvious that endorsing "Medicare for All," which involves yanking away the private health insurance of more than a 100 million Americans, is foolish and politically indefensible, but several candidates in the Democrat race did it anyway.

He's steered clear of other pitfalls since locking up the nomination. He's said he wouldn't ban fracking. He didn't endorse defunding the police. He defended the statues of America's founders.

He's indisputably slid left. This has been his MO his entire career—to stay smack in the middle of whatever is the consensus position of the Democratic Party at any given time.

His campaign knows that it benefits if the election is a referendum on Trump—and is acting accordingly. Why should Biden try to take the mic from Trump if the president is using it to feud with Bubba Wallace and Dr. Anthony Fauci? Not only do these diversions do nothing to dent Biden, they serve to validate the former vice president's case that the country needs a return to normalcy.

Still, nothing is decided in July. Biden's record and agenda give Trump targets to shoot at, and he should obviously take every opportunity to make the election, to the extent he can, about the radicalism of the Democratic Party.

Finally, there's the fact that Biden is an unsteady performer at best. The strictures around COVID-19 have relieved him of the rigors of the typical presidential campaign, but he's going to have to emerge to participate in a debate or debates in the fall, and no one can rule out some catastrophic failure.

So, Trump can't be counted out. But the Biden campaign is canny enough that it isn't going to make it easy for him.

By **DAVE ZWEIFEL**

Tribune News Service



Dave Zweifel is editor emeritus of The Capital Times, a newspaper in Madison, Wisconsin. This column is from the Progressive Media Project, which is run by The Progressive magazine, and distributed by Tribune News Service.

for individual rights and its dubious legality. People have been snatched from the streets, thrown into waiting vans and carted off to holding tanks without so much as being told why they were nabbed.

But these people are mere protesters, and as far as Donald Trump enablers are concerned, they have no rights.

The president is now vowing to do the same in other cities run by "do-nothing Democratic mayors," including Chicago, where gang shootings are as rampant as they have been for the past 50 years.

It would be one thing if sending secret federal cops to Chicago was to actually work with and bolster local police to get a handle on the gang violence, but we all know the truth.

This is nothing more than a charade that, less than four months before the presidential election, will be used to create footage for campaign ads to show just how tough Donald Trump is compared to those wimpy mayors who, of course, are deeply connected to Joe Biden.

Once the publicity and the campaign ads are generated, the feds will be gone.

Then the right-wingers can start worrying again about plots to get them.

Can we please stop spitting on grocery store workers?

Just a few months ago, Americans rightly lauded grocery store employers as heroes—underpaid front-line workers who braved the ravages of the coronavirus pandemic so households could put food on the table.

These days, not so much. Being on the front line now means dealing with tired, impatient customers who don't want to follow the aisle arrows and for some reason, have a real problem wearing masks and following coronavirus restrictions.

In Harrisburg, Pa., a Giant shopper spit on the face of an employee after being told to wait to enter the store because of capacity limits. In Lansing, Mich., when a Kroger employee told a customer he needed to wear a face mask, the shopper shot back, "I don't give a damn about your health."

I wish these were isolated incidents. In Pittsburgh, an irate customer crouched under a plastic barrier and spit on an employee's face. In Mount Clemens, Mich., a former mayoral candidate assaulted a grocery worker and spit on police officers after being told to wear a mask.

And on an on. Months ago, we asked these underpaid workers with little to no job security to risk their health so we could stock our cabinets with Cheez-Its. In many cases, their own employers appeared to care more about profits than worker safety. Now were tasking grocery workers with managing the public health

By **ROB TORNOE**

The Philadelphia Inquirer



by instructing agitated shoppers to follow coronavirus mandates.

It's not as if working at a grocery store is a path for immunity to the pandemic. Last month, United Food and Commercial Workers International, which represents 1.3 million workers in the U.S., said at least 82 grocery store workers have died from COVID-19 and 11,507 have been infected. And most supermarket chains—places like Walmart, Trader Joe's, Whole Foods, Target—aren't even required to notify anyone if a worker dies or tests positive.

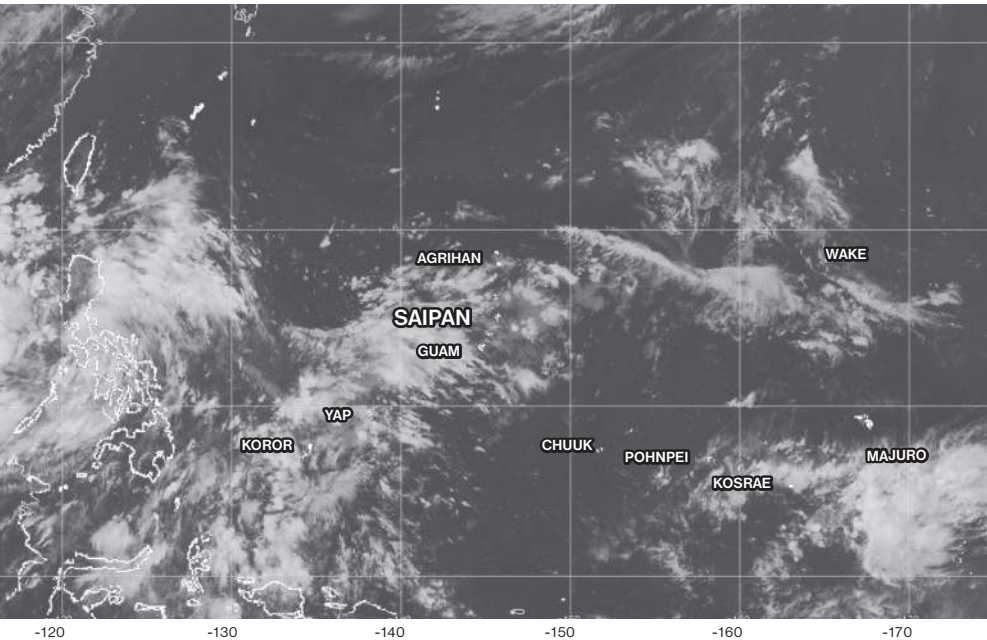
"People take drugstore and grocery store workers for granted," Wendell Young, president of Local 1776 Keystone State of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union, told the Inquirer back in March. He was right then, and he's right now.



File photo shows a shopping cart at a grocery store.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TODAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY		SUNDAY		MONDAY	
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.		Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers and thunderstorms.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.		Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	
89°	78°	86°	77°	89°	78°	89°	78°	89°	78°
YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE									



PICTURE TIME: 12:12 PM, WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2020

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Showers and thunderstorms continue to develop to the east of the Marianas, however, remain outside of the coastal waters. Numerous showers are now expected to move into the region later this evening.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklist-household-ready.html>
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

able, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

- ### Continue good hand hygiene

 - Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
 - Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

- ### Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

 - Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
 - Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
 - Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not avail-

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

MICRONESIA			▲▼°F
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorm	88° / 81°	
Palau	Thunderstorm	85° / 77°	
Yap	Thunderstorm	84° / 79°	
Chuuk	Thunderstorm	86° / 79°	
Pohnpei	Thunderstorm	86° / 77°	
Kosrae	Thunderstorm	86° / 80°	
Majuro	Thunderstorm	85° / 80°	

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	5:58 AM	6:47 PM
Friday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Saturday	5:59 AM	6:47 PM
Sunday	5:59 AM	6:46 PM
Monday	5:59 AM	6:46 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	1:36 AM	2:52 PM
Friday	-	2:28 AM	3:52 PM
Saturday	-	3:23 AM	4:50 PM
Sunday	-	4:19 AM	5:45 PM
Monday	-	5:16 AM	6:37 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE			▲▼°F
Auckland	Cloudy	58° / 53°	
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	93° / 75°	
Hong Kong	Thunderstorm	91° / 82°	
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	85° / 75°	
London	Partly Cloudy	83° / 63°	
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	85° / 63°	
Manila	Thunderstorm	88° / 78°	
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	57° / 39°	
Miami	Partly Cloudy	87° / 80°	
New York	Thunderstorm	93° / 74°	
Osaka	Thunderstorm	89° / 77°	
Paris	Sunny	89° / 66°	
Busan	Thunderstorm	81° / 74°	
Rome	Sunny	99° / 72°	
Salem	Thunderstorm	83° / 72°	
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	66° / 56°	
Seoul	Thunderstorm	80° / 74°	
Tokyo	Showers	79° / 71°	
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	93° / 74°	

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY			FEET
2:51 AM	HIGH TIDE	2.09	
10:26 AM	LOW TIDE	0.10	
5:39 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.81	
10:27 PM	LOW TIDE	1.37	

FLIGHT SCHEDULE

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA 117	7:30AM	8:10AM	1,4,6	UA 174	5:50AM	6:30AM	1,4,6

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

SAIPAN TO ROTA				ROTA TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301.2	8:30AM	9:00AM	Tues/Fri	3101.2	9:30AM	10:00AM	Tues/Fri
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Tues/Fri	3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Tues/Fri

ROTA TO GUAM				GUAM TO ROTA			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable	4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN				TINIAN TO SAIPAN			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily	2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily	2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2104	10:30	10:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable	2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2108	14:30	14:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
				2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
				2111	17:30	17:45	Temporarily Unavailable
				2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

NEWS DESK

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ADVERTISING

For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

Business

Changming Carwash:
Auto detailing since 2005

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

If you want your ride cleaned like it just came out of the dealership, then look no farther than Changming Carwash in Garapan.

Owner Zheng Xuezhen said the carwash has been in businesses since 2005 and originally was next to the former Round 2 Bar & Grill along Garapan Street before moving 500 feet to its latest location on the adjacent street.

“We opened at our new location in November 2017 ready to welcome our old and new customers,” she said.

The move was for the better, as Changming Carwash now had more room. That allowed Zheng to install an airconditioned lounge for customers. She said this allows their customers to wait in the airconditioned comfort of their new lounge. “Our new location is bigger, [with] better light, and, of course, an airconditioned lounge.”

Zheng said what sets Changming Carwash apart from other auto detailing services on island is their “long history of car washing and rich work experience.”

Changming Carwash has



Changming Carwash only uses rainwater and Armor All car care products.



Changming Carwash has a full staff that guarantees your vehicle will be spick and span in 30 minutes tops.



Changming Carwash moved to its present location in 2017.

MARK RABAGO

increased its prices only a tad since it first opened 15 years ago. “The price has not changed much from 2005 to now,” Zheng said, as full detailing (inside and outside) of sedans costs only \$15 and pickups and SUVs \$20-\$25.

Changming Carwash also

exclusively uses rainwater to better protect the vehicles they wash and only uses Armor All car care products in detailing.

A full staff also allows them to finish their detailing job in half an hour tops, according to Zheng.

Currently, the carwash has a loyalty card promotion where

10 cleanups (inside and outside cleaning) gets you one free service.

Changming Carwash is open from Monday to Sunday. For more information or to schedule a detailing service, call 233-3038 or reach them via Facebook.

Brazil virus payout cuts extreme poverty to least in decades

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP)—Brazil’s extreme poverty has plunged due to a monthly federal handout during the coronavirus pandemic, but threatens to bounce back once the government ceases the stop-gap welfare program, a report said Tuesday.

The study by the Getulio Vargas Foundation, a university and think tank, said the number of Brazilians living in extreme poverty fell to 6.9 million in June, or 3.3% of Brazil’s population—the lowest level since the late 1970s. As this year began, 6.2% Brazilians were in extreme poverty, the study said.

“Although we can’t directly compare the figures because of recent methodological changes on the government’s database, we can say it’s one of the lowest proportions ever recorded,” Daniel Duque, the study’s author, said by phone from Rio de Janeiro. He used the World Bank standard that classifies anyone earning less than \$1.90 a day to be in extreme poverty.

The federal government since April has doled out \$115 monthly to informal-sector

workers and micro businesses affected by the pandemic, with single mothers receiving double. Duque and other experts say that helped alleviate poverty in a nation riven by inequality, with average monthly income last year at \$280, according to the statistics institute.

The experts warned, however, that the relief is temporary and the number of impoverished Brazilians will rise after the last payment, currently slated for August.

“No question we are in a transitory situation. We won’t have this volume of income transfer forever,” Duque said. “I think it is very likely we will return to previous poverty levels. I fear we can go back to even worse levels if the labor market doesn’t recover.”

The payments have already cost the government more than \$32 billion and President Jair Bolsonaro’s economy minister, Paulo Guedes, has said its coffers can ill afford to maintain the program much longer. Loose fiscal policy and rising government debt as a percentage of GDP prompted a slew of credit rating downgrades in

recent years, and Guedes assumed his position with pledges to slash spending and shore up government accounts.

“We can’t continue for long. It’s 50 billion reais per month (around \$10 billion). It’s not money we have to spare. We are increasing our debt with it,” Bolsonaro said early in July.

The benefit was initially planned to last until June, but the president extended it by two months.

Bolsonaro’s political allies have started pressuring for another extension, arguing the payments help prevent further loss of support stemming from the president’s handling of the COVID-19 crisis. Latin America’s largest nation has confirmed more than 2.4 million infections and 88,000 dead—the second highest totals in the world.

Bolsonaro has consistently downplayed the virus’ severity, arguing that the impact of restrictions on economic activity will prove far more damaging. Economists surveyed by Brazil’s central bank expect the economy to shrink 5.8% this year.

GOP tucks \$8 billion for military weaponry in virus bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—A new \$1 trillion COVID-19 response package by Senate Republicans is supposed to give the government more weapons to battle the surging coronavirus pandemic. But GOP lawmakers have more than just the “invisible enemy” in mind.

The Republican measure includes billions for F-35 fighters, Apache helicopters and infantry carriers sought by Washington’s powerful defense lobby. Overall, the proposal stuffs \$8 billion into Pentagon weapons systems built by defense contractors like Boeing, Lockheed Martin and General Dynamics—corporate titans that sit atop the Washington influence industry.

The bill, drafted by Senate Appropriations Committee Chair Richard Shelby, R-Ala., would deposit \$2.2 billion in Pentagon shipbuilding accounts, boost missile defense systems in California and Alaska and deliver about \$1.4 billion for C-130 transport planes and F-35 fighters manufactured by Lockheed Martin Corp. Some of the F-35s could be delivered to an Air National Guard unit in Montgomery, Alabama.

In several cases, Shelby proposes restoring cuts imposed by the administration that diverted almost \$4 billion to help pay for construction of President Donald Trump’s border wall. The Pentagon won significant defense increases last year with passage

of a budget agreement that erased automatic spending cuts known as sequestration.

The \$8 billion weapons procurement package is part of a \$29.4 billion defense portion of the GOP’s \$1 trillion coronavirus response measure, a White House-backed package released Monday. Providing that money now would help build headroom into the annual defense funding bill that Congress plans to write later this year.

The outlook for Shelby’s proposed defense projects could be dim. Democrats slammed the add-ons, and Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky said Tuesday that the final package should not stray from the coronavirus response.

STOCK
PORTFOLIO

LEADING INDICATORS

DOW 26,379.28 -205.49 .77%	S&P 3,218.44 -20.97 .65%	NASDAQ 10,402.09 -134.18 1.27%
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EXCHANGE RATES

Hong Kong Dollar	7.7500	Russian Ruble	71.5643
Australian Dollar	1.3954	Singapore Dollar	1.3772
British Pound	0.7733	Japanese Yen	104.9480
Canadian Dollar	1.3364	Malaysian Ringgit	4.2135
Chinese Yuan	6.9115	New Zealand Dollar	1.5010
Euro	0.8523	Philippine Peso	48.3357
		Taiwan Dollar	28.8503
		Thailand Baht	31.4610

Nation

Biden vows to fight racial inequality with economic agenda

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden promised Tuesday that his economic agenda would combat long-standing racial inequalities as he sought to draw another sharp contrast with President Donald Trump.

Biden said the Republican president is exacerbating social discord across the country, including by sending federal authorities into major cities under the pretense of addressing crime. And he said Trump has little interest in addressing the racism that Biden said has been laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic, which disproportionately claims people of color as its victims, or in an election-year reckoning with police violence against Black men.

“He can’t turn the economy around. He’s determined to stoke division and chaos,” Biden said, speaking in a community center gymnasium in his hometown of Wilmington, Delaware. “It’s not good for the country, but Donald Trump doesn’t care. His campaign is failing and he’s looking for a lifeline.”

Biden countered with a litany of proposals to steer federal money and tax credits to small business and economic development programs for minority-owned firms and disadvantaged neighborhoods. Biden also said he’d encourage home ownership to help close wealth gaps among minority communities and push the nation’s banking system, including the Federal Reserve, to more directly address economic inequality.

Many of his proposals—and



AP
Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks at a campaign event at the William “Hicks” Anderson Community Center in Wilmington, Del., Tuesday, July 28, 2020.

ally and in many competitive states that determine the Electoral College outcome. But Biden’s aides are keenly aware that Hillary Clinton lost key battleground states four years ago in part because of a drop in turnout among nonwhite voters from what President Barack Obama drew in 2012.

As part of his attacks on Trump’s approach to race, Biden blasted the president for ordering federal authorities to intervene against protesters in places like Portland, Oregon, and Chicago, while small businesses around the country continue to struggle or shut down because of the coronavirus.

the billions in federal spending needed to pay for it—had already been promised as part of previous, larger Biden plans to jump-start the economy when the coronavirus outbreak begins to recede. But as protests against institutional racism and police brutality have swept the country in recent months, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee is attempting to show voters that he’s committed to implementing specific remedies that can promote racial and economic equality should he win the White House in November.

Biden’s speech and his subsequent question-and-answer

session with reporters — just his third extended news conference in four months — come as he nears a decision on a running mate. Biden came prepared to talk about at least one of the top contenders: California Sen. Kamala Harris.

An Associated Press photographer captured Biden’s handwritten notes with talking points on several issues. Topping the list was Harris.

A recent Politico story alleged that Biden’s longtime friend and vetting committee leader Chris Dodd, a former Democratic senator like Biden, had raised concerns about Harris going after Biden last summer on the

debate stage and showing “no remorse” in conversations with Biden’s campaign. On Biden’s notepad, he’d written below Harris’ name: “Do not hold grudges” and “Great respect for her.”

Biden did not field a question specifically about Harris. But he has praised her extensively, and he’s confirmed in recent weeks that his short list for vice president includes several women of color. His decision is expected to have unusual importance given his age, 77, and the fact that he’s a white man leading a diverse party.

Recent polls have shown Biden leading Trump nation-

Barr defends aggressive federal response to protests

WASHINGTON (AP)—Attorney General William Barr defended the aggressive federal law enforcement response to civil unrest in America as he testified for the first time before the House Judiciary Committee, pushing back against angry, skeptical Democrats who said President Donald Trump’s administration is unconstitutionally suppressing dissent.

The hearing, held Tuesday as the late civil rights icon John Lewis lay in state steps away outside the Capitol, highlighted the wide election-year gulf between the two parties on police brutality and systemic racism in law enforcement. Massive protests have sparked unrest across the nation following the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police, and calls for police reform are growing louder.

But Barr said “violent rioters and anarchists have hijacked legitimate protests” and argued the violence taking place in Portland, Oregon, and other cities is disconnected from Floyd’s killing, which he called a “horrible” event that prompted a necessary national reckoning on the relationship between the Black community and law enforcement. But he also said there was no systemic

racism in law enforcement.

“Largely absent from these scenes of destruction are even superficial attempts by the rioters to connect their actions to George Floyd’s death or any legitimate call for reform,” Barr said of the Portland protests.

The hearing marks Barr’s first appearance before the committee after 18 months in office, bringing him face-to-face with the panel that voted last year to hold him in contempt and is holding hearings on what Democrats say is politicization of the Justice Department under his watch. But little new ground was uncovered; fuming Democrats often used their five minutes to lay out their frustrations and cut Barr off as he attempted to answer questions.

The hearing comes during a tumultuous stretch in which Barr has taken actions cheered by President Donald Trump but condemned by Democrats and other critics. Among them: the Justice Department’s decision to drop the prosecution of former Trump administration national security adviser Michael Flynn and Barr’s urging for a more lenient sentence for Trump ally Roger Stone, a move that prompted the entire trial team’s departure. Trump later commuted the sentence entirely.

Trump defends disproved COVID-19 treatment

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump issued a stout defense Tuesday of a disproved use of a malaria drug as a treatment for the coronavirus, hours after social media companies moved to take down videos promoting its use as potentially harmful misinformation.

The president, in a marked shift from the more measured approach he’s taken toward the virus in recent days, took to Twitter to promote hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and to amplify criticism of Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s top infectious disease expert. In a White House briefing, Trump defended his decision to promote a viral video of a group of doctors promoting the use of the drug Monday, even

though his own administration withdrew emergency authorization for its use against the coronavirus.

“I think they’re very respected doctors,” Trump said, adding they believed in the drug. “There was a woman who was spectacular in her statements about it.” The doctors, members of a group called America’s Frontline Doctors, took part in an event organized by Tea Party Patriots Action, a dark money group that has helped fund a pro-Trump political action committee.

Scientific studies have shown hydroxychloroquine can do more harm than good when used to treat symptoms of COVID-19.

Trump, his son Donald Trump Jr., and others shared video of the event on Facebook and Twitter, prompting

both companies to step in and remove the content as part of an aggressive push to keep the sites free of potentially harmful information about the virus—though not before more than 17 million people had seen one version of the video circulating on the web.

The decision to remove the videos sparked conservative claims of “censorship,” with Simone Gold, one of the doctors, tweeting that “there are always opposing views in medicine.”

“Treatment options for COVID-19 should be debated, and spoken about among our colleagues in the medical field,” she wrote. “They should never, however, be censored and silenced.”

Others stressed the differences between medical opinion and peer-reviewed scientific studies.

Many high-quality studies have found no evidence that hydroxychloroquine, when used with or without the antibiotic azithromycin, as touted many times by Trump, helps treat coronavirus infection or prevent serious disease from it. They include studies commissioned by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, the World Health Organization and universities in the U.S. and around the world.

Because of the lack of benefit and the risks of serious side effects such as heart rhythm problems, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently revoked its brief authorization of emergency use of the drug for COVID-19. NIH treatment guidelines also specifically recommend against hydroxychloroquine’s use, except in formal studies.

Asia

China, South Korea see upticks in virus cases

BEIJING (AP)—China reported more than 100 new cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday as the country continues to battle an outbreak in Xinjiang.

The 101 new cases was China's highest daily increase in weeks. The northwestern region of Xinjiang accounted for 89, with another eight in the northeastern province of Liaoning and one in Beijing. Another three cases were brought from outside the country by returning Chinese citizens.

Outside of Xinjiang, the virus has been largely contained in mainland China with the death toll from COVID-19 remaining at 4,634 among 84,060 cases registered since the pandemic first emerged from the central city of Wuhan late last year.

Hospitals are treating 482 people for the disease, with another 274 in isolation while being monitored for showing signs of infection or for having tested positive for the virus without displaying symptoms.

Xinjiang's outbreak has centered on the region's capital and largest city of Urumqi, where authorities have isolated some communities, restricted public transport and ordered widespread testing.

In other developments around the Asia-Pacific region:

■ South Korea reported 48 additional cases, maintaining an uptick in new infections. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Wednesday the additional figures took the country's total to 14,251 with 300 deaths. Fourteen of the new patients were locally infected while the rest 34 came from overseas. South Korea has been reporting roughly 20-60 new cases every day since it eased its strict social distancing rules in early May.

■ Australia's hard-hit Victoria state recorded its lowest daily tally of COVID-19 cases in nine days while the state premier expressed hope it was the start of a downward trend. Victoria reported 295 new cases and nine deaths, seven of which were in aged care homes that are bearing the

brunt of the pandemic. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said "trends are not made in one day" but that he hoped the decline continued. The outbreak has been concentrated in Melbourne, Australia's second-largest city, which is halfway through a six-week lockdown.

■ New Zealand's government says it will rush through new laws to allow some people to be charged for their border quarantine costs. New Zealand hasn't had any community transmission of the virus for three months, and everybody who enters the country is required to spend two weeks isolated at a hotel. The cost to taxpayers has already amounted to hundreds of millions of dollars. Under the new law, adults who leave or enter the country for short holidays or business trips will be required to pay about \$2,100 toward their quarantine costs. But there will be many exceptions to the new fees, and officials acknowledge it will affect less than 10% of travelers.

Head of China CDC gets injected with experimental vaccine

BEIJING (AP)—The head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention says he has been injected with an experimental coronavirus vaccine in an attempt to persuade the public to follow suit when one is approved.

"I'm going to reveal something undercover: I am injected with one of the vaccines," Gao Fu said in a webinar Sunday hosted by Alibaba Health, an arm of the Chinese e-commerce giant, and Cell Press, an American publisher of scientific journals. "I hope it will work."

The Associated Press reported earlier this month that a state-owned Chinese company injected employees with experimental shots in March, even before the government-approved testing in people—a move that raised ethical concerns among some experts.

Gao did not say when or how he took the vaccine candidate, leaving it unclear whether he was injected as part of a government-approved human trial. He did not respond to requests for comment.

The claim underscores the enormous stakes as China competes with U.S. and British companies to be the first with a vaccine to help end the pandemic—a feat that would be both a scientific and political triumph.

China has positioned itself to be a strong contender. Eight of the nearly two dozen potential vaccines in various stages of human testing worldwide are from China, the most of any country.

Gao declined to say which of the vaccines he was injected with, saying he didn't want to be seen as "doing some kind of propaganda" for a particular company.

Last month, Gao was a co-author on a paper introducing one candidate, an "inactivated" vaccine made by growing the whole virus in a lab and then killing it. That candidate is being developed by an affiliate of state-owned SinoPharm.

The company previously said in an online post that 30 employees, including top executives, helped "pre-test" its vaccine in March, before it was approved for its initial human study. Scientists vehemently debate such self-experimentation, because what happens to one or a few people outside a well-designed study is not usable evidence of safety or effectiveness.

Chinese state media have also reported that employees of state-owned companies going abroad are being offered injections of the vaccine.

Gao said he took the injection to instill public confidence

in vaccines, especially amid a tide of rising mistrust that has fueled conspiracy theories and attacks on scientists.

"Everybody has suspicions about the new coronavirus vaccine," Gao said. "As a scientist, you've got to be brave. ... If even we didn't do it, how can we persuade the whole world—all the people, the public—to be vaccinated?"

Andrew Rennekamp, an editor at Cell and one of the moderators of Gao's webinar, said, "This is a brave thing to do, and it shows his faith in what he believes is the safety of the vaccine and his commitment to the science and to public health."

Even as China is among the leaders in the global race for a vaccine, it is also striving to overcome years of drug scandals—the latest coming in 2018 when authorities recalled a rabies vaccine and later announced that batches of children's DPT vaccines, for diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus, were ineffective.

Gao himself had also been under heavy scrutiny for the China CDC's initial handling of the coronavirus outbreak, both at home and abroad. He largely vanished from public view for months, resurfacing again in an interview with state media in late April.

World

Maduro's hold on Venezuela tightens as coronavirus surges

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP)—More than a year after a young U.S.-backed politician rose up to oust Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, the socialist leader holds a yet stronger grip on power—with a boost from the novel coronavirus.

The Venezuelan opposition hoped that 2020 could bring new momentum after several failed pushes to overthrow Maduro. Then came the coronavirus. Analysts say the pandemic has helped suck away the opposition's already flagging support.

Fear of contagion has helped keep protesters off the streets, and the virus-driven end of a slight economic upturn has kept Venezuelans focused on daily survival, not politics.

Against that backdrop, Maduro has instituted sweeping measures ensuring Venezuela's electoral system is bent in his favor. Meanwhile, opposition leader Juan Guaidó's popularity has continued to plummet.

"In many ways the pandemic has been more of a blessing to Maduro than a curse," said Geoff Ramsey, a Venezuela expert at the



A man wearing a face mask amid the COVID-19 pandemic passes a mural of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in Caracas, Venezuela, Wednesday, July 22, 2020.

Washington Office on Latin America think tank. "Maduro is stronger now than at any point in the last 18 months."

Venezuelan officials announced the first COVID-19 cases in mid-March, prompting Maduro to enact a nationwide lockdown that remains in effect. At least 146 have died and roughly 16,000 fallen sick, according to the government's count — likely a vast underestimate because of limited testing.

On nightly broadcasts, Maduro and his lieutenants update citizens on the numbers, share information on shipments of humanitarian

aid from allies like Russia and China and decree new measures to halt the virus.

"Maduro has had an opportunity to show his territorial control," said Luis Vicente León, a Venezuelan political analyst.

Engineer Francisco Mato, once among thousands cheering Guaidó, said today his hopes of a political change have taken a back seat.

"You have to fight for your family, for food and make sure we don't get sick," said Matos, 42, wearing a face mask while shopping for groceries. "Politics seem like a far distant option."

Iran missiles target fake carrier as US bases go on alert

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard launched missiles Tuesday targeting a mock aircraft carrier in the strategic Strait of Hormuz, a drill that included such a barrage of fire the U.S. military temporarily put two regional bases in the Mideast on alert amid tensions between the two countries.

The drill—and the American response to it—underlined the lingering threat of military conflict between Iran and the U.S. after a series of escalating incidents last year led to an American drone strike killing a top Iranian general in Baghdad. Tehran responded to that strike by firing ballistic missiles that wounded dozens of American forces in Iraq.

While the coronavirus pandemic has engulfed both Iran and the U.S. for months, there has been a growing confrontation as America argues to extend a yearslong U.N. weapons embargo on Tehran that is due to expire in October. A recent incident over Syria involving an American jet fighter approaching an Ira-

nian passenger plane also has renewed tensions.

Iranian commandos fast-roped down from a helicopter onto the replica in the footage aired Tuesday from the exercise called "Great Prophet 14." Anti-aircraft guns opened fire on a target drone near the port city of Bandar Abbas.

State television footage also showed a variety of missiles being fired from fast boats, trucks, mobile launchers and a helicopter, some targeting the fake carrier. A commander said the Guard, a force answerable only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, planned to fire "long-range ballistic missiles" as well during the drill that will continue Wednesday.

Ballistic missile fire detected from the drill resulted in American troops being put on alert at Al-Dhafra Air Base in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates and Al-Udeid Air Base, the forward headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command in Qatar, the military said. Troops sought cover during that time.

"The incident lasted for a matter of minutes and an all clear was declared after the threat ... had passed," said U.S. Army Maj. Beth Rioridan, a Central Command spokeswoman.

Both bases are hundreds of kilometers (miles) away from where Iran put the replica aircraft carrier.

Al-Dhafra also is temporarily home to five French-built Rafale fighter jets on their way to India for that country's air force.

Other footage from the exercise aired by state television showed fast boats encircling the mock-up, kicking up white waves in their wake. While Iran's naval forces are dwarfed by the U.S. Navy, its commanders practice so-called "swarm" tactics aimed at overwhelming the U.S. carriers that pass through the strait on their way in and out of the Persian Gulf.

It wasn't immediately clear if all the footage was from Tuesday, as one overhead surveillance image that appeared to be shot by a drone bore Monday's date.

Environment

One of Hawaii's high-profile politicians has dismissed a recent Department of Energy report concluding that a leaking U.S. nuclear waste repository in the Marshall

Islands is safe for people there.

She called for the department to convene a more independent assessment of the waste site.

"I think it's time the Department of Energy relied on someone with fresh eyes to examine the situation," said U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard, one of Hawaii's two Democratic House members, in a recent interview with the Los Angeles Times.

Gabbard, who gained national attention by launching what some called a quixotic campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, has been outspoken in Congress on behalf of the Marshall Islands, which the United States used as a testing site for scores of nuclear weapons during the Cold War.

She's pushed to reinstate Medicaid eligibility to people from the Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau who are working and living in the United States but lack access to healthcare. She also was instrumental in requiring the Department of Energy to reexamine the safety of Runit Dome, a leaking nuclear waste repository in the Marshall Islands, as part of the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act.

"The U.S. government is responsible for this storage site and must ensure the protection of the people and our environment from the toxic waste stored there," Gabbard said in a news release announcing her amendment to the defense bill.

In calling for "fresh eyes" on the waste site, Gabbard was referring to Terry Hamilton, who has been the Energy Department's go-to contractor for nuclear issues in the Marshall Islands since 1990.

Hamilton was a contributor to the Department of Energy report, which concluded that while sea level rise could increase storm surge and "lead to wave-induced over-wash of lower sections of the dome," there is not enough definitive data to determine "how these events might impact on the environment."

Neither Hamilton nor his employer, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, responded to a request for comment. But in an earlier email, Hamilton said the



The U.S. Department of Energy has disclosed high levels of radiation in giant clams in a lagoon near the Runit Dome, where the U.S. entombed radioactive waste from U.S. nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands almost four decades ago.

Rep. Tulsi Gabbard dismisses US claim that Marshall Islands nuclear waste site is safe

By SUSANNE RUST
Los Angeles Times

risk posed by the waste site is low "based on the argument that the total amount of fallout contamination contained in Runit Dome is dwarfed by residual amounts of fallout contamination deposited in marine sediments inside Enewetak lagoon."

He added that, though he did not write the document, he provided the "reports, publications and data" that informed the Energy Department's conclusions.

Published at the start of July, the assessment referenced 27 papers and reports, 25 of which were not peer-reviewed, including 13 by Hamilton. All were published by agencies within the U.S. government.

The lack of independent review frustrated both Gabbard and some Marshallese leaders.

"The Department of Energy is well aware of the public mistrust for their research in the Marshall Islands, but they have never demonstrated any interest in doing anything about it, i.e. including independent scientists in their



Tulsi Gabbard addresses supporters from the stage at the Des Moines Register Soapbox at the Iowa State Fair on Aug. 9, 2019.

studies or consulting with Marshallese communities for their knowledge on the environment," Rhea Christian-Moss wrote in an email to The Times.

"I'm not sure credibility is their goal," she said.

Runit Dome, located in the Marshall Island's Enewetak Atoll, holds more than 3.1 mil-

lion cubic feet — or 35 Olympic-sized swimming pools — of U.S.-produced radioactive soil and debris, including lethal amounts of plutonium, produced by 67 bomb tests between 1946 and 1958.

Spurred by "moral obligation," the U.S. government cleaned the atoll of irradiated debris and soil before handing

the islands back to the Marshallese, in 1980. The Marshallese had been involuntarily removed during the 1940s.

The waste — metal and concrete debris, as well as irradiated topsoil — were dumped in an atomic bomb crater on Runit Island, and capped with concrete.

Last year, Hamilton told a small audience of Marshallese and American politicians and regulators that the dome was probably leaking, and that it was vulnerable to rising sea levels and increased storm surge.

Congress, in its approval of last year's defense bill, ordered the Energy Department to provide a written report on the risks that Runit Dome poses to the people, environment and wildlife of Enewetak lagoon. In addition, the report required an assessment of how climate change could affect the site.

"I think they'd be reacting very differently if it was in their backyard," she said of the report's authors.

Gabbard said she would

continue to press the issue with the Energy Department "and try to get answers that were not addressed in this report."

Although outspoken on the Marshall Islands and the U.S. radiation legacy there, Gabbard has often been publicly alone on the issue. Other key Democrats, including Sens. Mazie Hirono of Hawaii and Jack Reed of Rhode Island, ranking member of the Armed Services Committee, declined to comment for this story.

Michael Gerrard, a law professor at Columbia University who has worked with the Marshallese government on climate change and nuclear justice issues, was also unsatisfied with the Department of Energy report.

"Standard practice is to subject scientific papers and reports to peer review by experts who are not affiliated with the papers' authors," said Gerrard when asked about the material the government used to justify its report. "Self-review and affirmation are not accepted."

Life & Style

'7Watchmen' leads charge for Emmy nominations relevance

LOS ANGELES (AP)—The HBO series, which captured America's deep unease as it faces racial and political discord amid a pandemic, was nominated as best limited series and received bids for cast members including Regina

King and Jeremy Irons.

King was part of a vanguard of actors of color indicating that TV academy voters took heed of the social climate.

"Zendaya!" exclaimed Emmy announcement host Leslie Jones, her gleeful reaction to the "Euphoria" star's nomination as best actress in a drama. "This is a great day,"

Jones said.

She was part of a socially distanced, virtual release of nominees that was online, not on television as is usual. But nothing is usual during a coronavirus era that has brought Hollywood production to a virtual standstill and is making the Emmys and other awards grasp for alternatives.

The strong showing by Netflix's "Ozark" helped the streaming service achieve a record-setting 160 nominations that bested onetime perennial leader HBO, which earned 107 nods. Netflix, although the Emmy veteran among streamers, has yet to win a best comedy or drama series trophy.

Streaming newcomer Apple TV+ earned attention in its first season with Jennifer Aniston's best drama actress bid for "The Morning Show." Another streaming newbie, Disney+, saw its Star Wars franchise spinoff, "The Mandalorian," claim a best drama nomination among its hefty 15 total nods.

Andrea Bocelli, who had COVID, says lockdown humiliated him

ROME (AP)—Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli, who recovered from COVID and whose moving Easter performance sought to raise hopes during the pandemic, is striking a different public note, saying Italy's lockdown made him feel "humiliated and offended" by depriving him of his freedom.

Bocelli spoke at a panel Monday in a Senate conference room, where he was introduced by right-wing opposition leader Matteo Salvini, who has railed against the government's stringent measures to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

The singer's announcement in May that he had recovered from the virus came weeks after his Easter Sunday performance in Milan's empty cathedral. At the time, Bocelli said that when he learned on March 10 that he had tested positive, just as the nation was going into lockdown, "I jumped into the pool, I felt well" and had only a slight fever. He apparently was referring to a private pool at his residence, as public gym pools were closed by then.

Bocelli told the conference at the Senate that he resented not being able to leave his home

even though he "committed no crime" and revealed, without providing details, that he violated that lockdown restriction.

At the height of lockdown, Italians could only leave home to go to essential jobs, walk dogs or buy food or medicine.

Dismayed, Health Ministry Undersecretary Pierpaolo Sileri on Tuesday said that perhaps Bocelli "wanted to express the inconvenience of every Italian who, because of lockdown, stayed home."

"I wouldn't have said those words, but I imagine he'll be able to explain it somehow," Sileri added.

The conference was held on the eve of Premier Giuseppe Conte's appearance in the Senate, set for later Tuesday, where he laid out his center-left government's case for extending for three months a state of emergency for the pandemic, which expires on July 31.

Conte said the extension is aimed at preserving measures that allow an efficient response should the virus spike again, not to "spread unjustified fears" among the population. He accused the opposition of using "polemical and even ideological veins" in the debate.

Depp lawyer says Amber Heard lied during tabloid libel case

LONDON (AP)—Johnny Depp's high-stakes libel case against a British tabloid that accused him of assaulting ex-wife Amber Heard wrapped up Tuesday in a London court, with the star's lawyer calling Heard "a compulsive liar" and claiming that Depp was the real victim of abuse in the relationship.

The "Pirates of the Carib-

bean" star is suing News Group Newspapers, publisher of The Sun, and the newspaper's executive editor, Dan Wootton, at the High Court in London over an April 2018 article that called him a "wife-beater."

In closing arguments at the three-week trial, Depp's lawyer, David Sherborne, said the actor strongly denied "this

reputation-destroying, career-ending allegation."

"He has never hit a woman in his entire life—period, full stop, nada," Sherborne said.

WHAT IS THE JUDGE DECIDING?

Judge Andrew Nicol has retired to consider his verdict, expected in a few weeks.

Neither Depp nor Heard is on

trial, though it has been easy to forget that during a case that dissected their toxic celebrity love affair.

Depp is the claimant in the civil case, NGN and Wootton are the defendants and Heard is their main witness. To defeat Depp's libel claim, the newspaper must persuade the judge that, on the balance of probabilities, its story was accurate.

Rembrandt, Miro fetch millions at Sotheby's virtual auction

LONDON (AP)—A self-portrait by Rembrandt sold for 14.5 million pounds (\$18.7 million) at a Sotheby's virtual auction Tuesday—a record price for a self-portrait by the Dutch master, the auctioneer's said.

Sotheby's said that the top end of the art market was "in rude health" and that its new live-streamed auction format, introduced because of the coronavirus pandemic, brought in a total of \$192.7 million Tuesday.

"Self portrait wearing a ruff and black hat," from 1632 when Rembrandt was aged 26, was sought by six bidders. It fell within the 12 to 16 million pounds estimate. The last self-portrait by Rembrandt to appear at auction was sold for 6.9 million pounds in 2003,



Sotheby's added.

The painting sold Tuesday was one of only three self-portraits by the painter to remain in private hands, and "the only one ever likely to come to auction." It measures about 22 by 16 centimeters, or about 8 by 6 inches.

The sale was part of a live-streamed global auction featuring dozens of pieces of artwork spanning five centuries of art history, from Rembrandt to Picasso, and from Joan Miró to Banksy. The event saw staff from the auction house's New

AP
In this Thursday, July 23, 2020 file photo, a Sotheby's employee adjusts a painting by Rembrandt, entitled 'Self-portrait, wearing a ruff and black hat' at Sotheby's auction rooms in London.

York, London and Hong Kong offices furiously gesticulating and whispering into phones as bidders vied to outdo each other.

The top-selling item was Miró's "Peinture (Femme au chapeau rouge)" (Woman in a Red Hat) from 1927, which fetched 22.3 million pounds (\$28.9 million). Sotheby's said the painting, which came to auction for the first time since 1966, set the highest sale price in Europe so far this year.

Presence of new girlfriend causes added pain for ex

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend of two years, "Kevin," recently broke up with me. We've had problems in the past about me lying to him or withholding information. I didn't lie because I'm an awful person. I lied because he had high expectations of me, and I didn't want to be a disappointment. He is truly the first person I have loved unconditionally since the breakup with my child's father five years ago.

Kevin and I are still friends—sometimes with benefits—but he has moved on to another woman. I'm heartbroken, and it has taken a toll on me. When I visited him the other day, I realized that she has practically moved in! She has her toiletries over there just like I did at one point.

I really want my boyfriend back! Kevin and I had talked about a life together, buying a house, taking trips, even getting married, the whole nine yards. But I'm worried this new woman will get the life with the man I love that I had been longing for for so long. What advice, if any, can you offer me?

LEFT BEHIND IN ALABAMA

DEAR LEFT BEHIND: I'm sorry to be the carrier of bad news, but it appears your ex-boyfriend is enjoying the benefits of being with two women, and you are getting your heart broken. It is time for you to move on because a new "chick" has all but moved into the nest you shared with Kevin.

One has to wonder if she is aware that he has a FWB in

addition to her. (I am betting the answer is no.) And by the way, I have to wonder what kind of a man behaves the way you have described because he is not treating you or this new woman honestly.

In your next relationship, I hope you will realize that you are good enough just as you ARE, and there is no reason you must live up to anyone else's expectations. That was your mistake this time around.

DEAR ABBY: My boyfriend of 10 years (we own a house together) has just announced he feels he should move closer to his ailing mother. She lives about 250 miles away, a four-hour drive. Is this a thing? Do people do this? He did not ask me to move with him.

We live less than a mile from my own elderly mother, and I do dote on her. He knows I wouldn't leave her. If he goes through with this, I'll be heartbroken.

We have no mortgage. I can afford to stay in our house and—then what? Wait for him? Wait for his mother to die? I could visit him once in a while, but my job, my mom and our cats are here. There's also my yard work. Do you think this could be his oddball way of breaking things off?

MISERABLE OVER THIS IN MICHIGAN

DEAR MISERABLE: This could be your boyfriend's at-

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



tempt to end your relationship—or not. He may not have invited you to move with him because he understands how many obligations you have between your mother, your job, your pets and the upkeep of your home.

It's time to ask him—calmly—how he views the implications of this move. Does he see it the same way you do? If his mom's health improves, it could be years before he returns, if ever. Because you have invested a decade of your life with him, you deserve some straight answers, and the best way to get them is to remain calm and be direct.

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

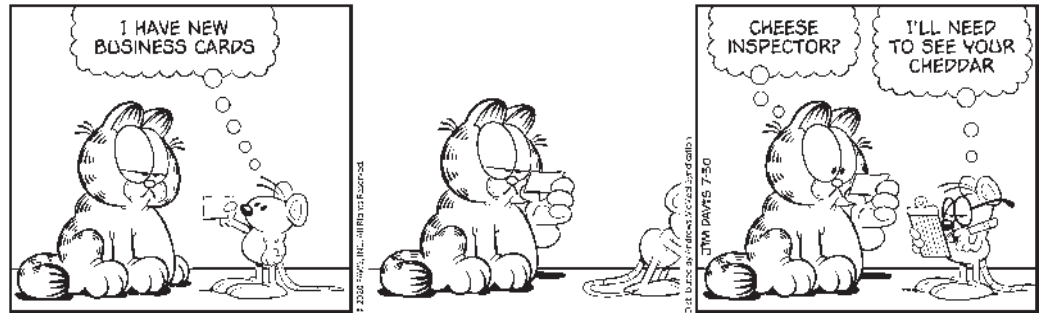
Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



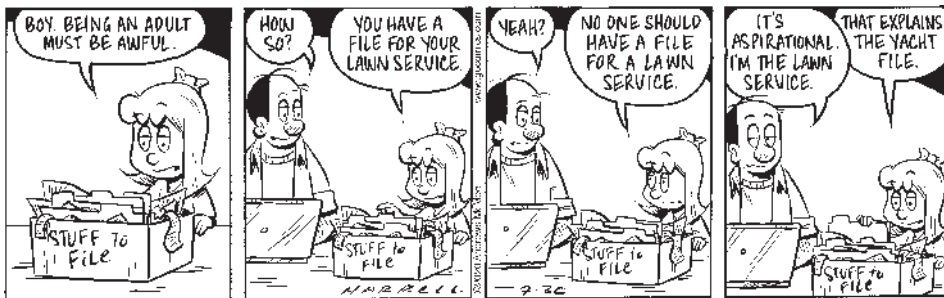
Garfield®

By Jim Davis



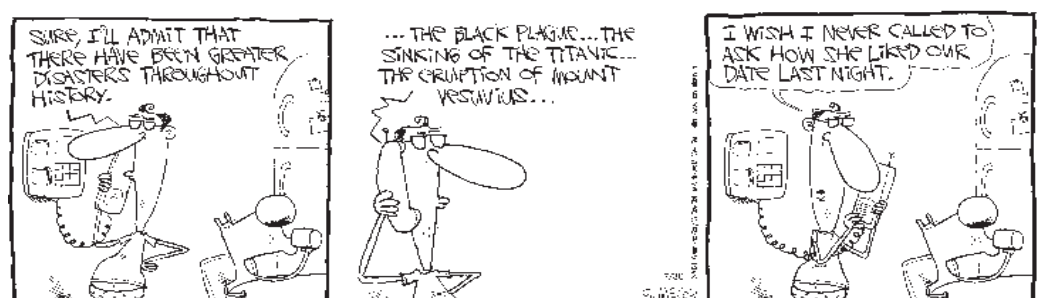
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy



CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Kermit, for one
5 Flow out
8 Despot
12 "— & Stitch"
13 Paris
14 Director
15 Waffle
16 Pledge
17 "No —!" ("Sure thing!")
18 Tennis
20 Brews, as tea
22 Greek
23 Rap
24 Easter
27 Harrison
32 Brit.
33 Asian
34 Judge

DOWN

1 Dog
2 Diana
3 "Three
4 Prods to
5 Much-
6 Scary cry
7 Upscale
8 Midwest
9 Enter
10 Perched
11 Filches

35 Mosque
38 Unfore-
seen
39 Equi-
problem
40 Ecol.
42 Squanders
49 Words to
Brutus
50 Kimono
52 Pedestal
53 Grime
54 Actress
55 To boot
56 Eyelid
57 Fawn's
mama
58 Any time
now

19 Ave.
21 Mahal
24 Height of
fashion?
25 "—
dream-
ing?"
26 Cleric's
calling
28 Chow
down
29 Sudden
plunge
30 Suffix
with
31 Eggy
quaff
36 Shrewd
37 Sturgeon
product
38 Brazilian
dances
41 Ma's
mate
42 Marries
43 Bickering
44 Auction-
eer's cry
46 — Alto,
Calif.
47 Canadian
gas
brand
48 Very
bright
51 Life story

Solution time: 24 mins.

M	A	R	S	T	A	S	M	O	G
A	L	E	C	A	N	I	H	U	D
M	I	C	H	I	G	A	N	E	L
A	D	D	E	P	S	C	A	L	E
B	E	N	E	T	N	A	G	A	V
A	V	F	Y	A	I	I	O	A	P
D	E	L	A	T	A	N	S	N	O
S	H	I	R	E	S	S	T	A	T
I	C	G	A	C	A	H	D	I	G
O	P	A	L	A	M	E	R	O	T
W	I	N	S	M	I	X	E	G	A

Yesterday's answer 7-30

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Simon Baker, 51; Terry Crews, 52; Lisa Kudrow, 57; Laurence Fishburne, 59.

Happy Birthday: Separate yourself from the crowd. Don't labor over what you can't do or what others are doing; stay focused on what's best for you and the people who complement your life and goals. Be passionate, and channel your energy into what counts. Personal improvements, physical fitness and romance are featured. Your numbers are 4, 12, 22, 28, 30, 37, 42.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Choose your words carefully, and be sensitive to others' thoughts and feelings. Getting along and being willing to compromise will alleviate problems with friends, relatives and peers. Look for the good in whatever situation you face. ★★★★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Consider your options, and discuss your plans with anyone who will be affected by the decision you make. Knowing the repercussions involved will help you ease stress and tension for yourself and those close to you. Don't take a financial risk. ★★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Keep the momentum going. Look at what's working best, and proceed with enthusiasm. Make decisions based on facts, not because of emotional ramifications. Do what's right, deal with opposition and stay focused on your objective. Romance is on the rise. ★★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You may feel like doing things differently, but sticking to methods that have worked well in the past will save you from stress. If you

want to do something unique, start a creative project that won't cost you financially, emotionally or physically. ★★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A routine will encourage you to stay on track. Proper diet and exercise will help you look and feel your best. Listen to your inner voice, not what an outsider tells you. The motives behind the compliments will be to your detriment. ★★★★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Mixed emotions will lead to inconsistency and difficulty dealing with others. Stay focused on what you can do and how best to approach what you'd like to happen with those who may interfere or stand in your way. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Choose to engage in activities or jobs that require you to use physical rather than intellectual skills. Talks will lead to a misunderstanding that results in a setback. Personal growth, physical improvements, love and romance are favored. ★★★★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Don't doubt what you can do. You'll have stellar ideas and the energy to get things done. Present and promote what you have to offer, and you'll receive positive input and the help and support you require to excel. ★★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Consider what makes you happy and the adjustments you can make at home to encourage a brighter future. Fitness, health and looking your best will lead to compliments that boost your ego. Entertainment, romance and home improvements are featured. ★★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Work diligently behind the scenes. You don't want to present what you are working on prematurely. Time is on your side, and perfection will pay off. A positive change at home will encourage a healthier, more productive lifestyle. ★★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Pay more attention to what's going on around you. The changes someone makes aren't likely to favor you. Listen carefully, but don't agree to anything without further investigation. Consider ways to use your skills more effectively. A reunion will be insightful. ★★★★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Keep your emotions under control. If you act in haste, you will have regrets. Take your time, consider your options and formulate a plan that will be good for you as well as for others. Don't let anyone meddle in your personal affairs. ★★

Birthday Baby: You are affectionate, playful and entertaining. You are competitive and astute.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

2	8	9		3		1		
	4			2	7			
				6				
	1	2						
7								5
					6	8		
			7					
		6	8		9			
3	9		6		5			4

Difficulty Level ★★★

7/30

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Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Last Friday's Answer

5	9	3	2	1	6	4	8	7
1	4	8	7	5	3	6	2	9
2	7	6	8	9	4	5	3	1
3	1	9	5	4	8	2	7	6
8	2	5	3	6	7	9	1	4
7	6	4	1	2	9	8	5	3
4	8	2	9	7	1	3	6	5
6	5	1	4	3	2	7	9	8
9	3	7	6	8	5	1	4	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDERWORD.

I AM STRONGER THAN I LOOK

Solution: 7 letters

J	Y	D	E	V	O	M	M	A	Y	K	S	U	H	S
A	D	E	L	B	M	I	N	P	O	W	E	R	A	O
C	A	R	B	S	G	S	A	Y	F	E	E	B	R	U
K	E	S	A	H	M	Q	E	T	S	B	H	R	D	N
E	T	L	T	A	E	U	L	N	M	L	E	E	B	D
D	S	Y	S	O	E	A	E	I	A	P	H	U	P	E
Y	D	S	D	M	C	T	L	I	E	S	L	F	R	T
L	E	D	D	R	N	K	T	T	I	K	I	W	O	A
L	I	E	I	I	U	N	I	L	H	X	F	E	F	R
A	F	F	L	F	A	T	P	E	E	Y	I	I	O	
T	I	F	O	T	I	M	S	D	R	K	H	G	C	
N	L	U	S	O	O	E	V	I	T	C	A	H	I	
E	A	B	N	C	O	M	P	E	T	E	N	T	E	V
M	U	S	C	L	E	S	T	A	R	K	D	T	N	N
S	Q	A	S	S	E	R	T	I	V	E	Y	E	T	I

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Accomplished, Active, Assertive, Beefy, Buffed, Bulk, Carbs, Competent, Firm, Fixed, Handy, Hard, Healthy, Husky, Intake, Intense, Invigorated, Jacked, Lean, Lift, Limber, Mass, Mentally, Mighty, Moved, Muscles, Nimble, Power, Proficient, Qualified, Repetitions, Solid, Sound, Squat, Stable, Stark, Steady, Stockier, Sturdy, Substantial, Weight

Yesterday's Answer: Oatmeal

The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

Zion could play, AD may miss reopening



FLORIDA (AP)—Zion Williamson returned to New Orleans Pelicans practice for the first time in nearly two weeks on Tuesday night and coach Alvin Gentry said the NBA's top overall draft pick might play when the club resumes its season against Utah on Thursday night.

"It really isn't a tough decision," Gentry said after practice in Lake Buena Vista, Florida. "If he's ready to play, he'll play. And if he's not, he won't."

"You're not going to risk anything long term for something very, very short term. So we'll see and evaluate tomorrow where he is—the medical people will—and so will Zion. Zion will tell us how he feels."

Gentry said Williamson, who left the team on July 16 to attend to a family medical matter, was held out of five-on-five drills and limited largely to three- and five-man sets with no defenders.

The Pelicans have another practice scheduled on Wednesday.

"Obviously, we would love to have Zion. Let's be honest," Gentry said. "He's one of those generational players that can do a lot of things."

After Williamson missed New Orleans' first 44 games while recovering from right knee surgery, the former Duke star averaged 23.6 points and 6.8 rebounds in his first 19 NBA contests before the coronavirus pandemic suspended the season in March.

"We're a lot better with him than we are without him; we know that," guard Lonzo Ball said.

Williamson looked leaner when the club returned to practice in recent weeks has said he worked hard during the NBA's hiatus on his game and his con-

ditioning.

That kept the Pelicans hopeful that he'd be able to get ready to play quickly when he returned from a family matter that he has kept private. Williamson, who tested negative for COVID-19 daily during his eight-day absence, has been back at the NBA's base in Disney's Wide World of Sports since Friday night, when he began an league-mandated four-day quarantine that ended Tuesday.

The Pelicans are 3 1/2 games behind Memphis for the eighth and final playoff spot in the Western Conference. But the NBA has also made it possible in this unusual year to participate in the postseason by finishing ninth and within four games of the eighth seed. In that case, the ninth-place team would have to beat the eighth-place team in two straight to advance to the full NBA playoffs. Portland currently holds the ninth spot, with New Orleans and Sacramento less than one game behind in a tie for 10th.

Meanwhile, with re-opening night fast approaching Anthony Davis' status is uncertain.

Davis, who left the Los Angeles Lakers' second scrimmage after getting poked in the eye and didn't play in the team's exhibition finale at Walt Disney World, didn't practice on Tuesday. The All-Star forward is still being listed as day-to-day.

"There is some concern that he could potentially not play Thursday, but we're hopeful that he does and we'll see how that plays out," Lakers coach Frank Vogel said. "He's going to continue to be evaluated each day."

The Lakers play the Los Angeles Clippers on Thursday night, when the NBA season resumes with the start of seed-



AP
In this March 4, 2020 file photo, New Orleans Pelicans forward Zion Williamson (1) takes a shot against Dallas Mavericks forwards Kristaps Porzingis (6) and Maxi Kleber (42) during the first half of an NBA game in Dallas.

Bubble for next season

The NBA's bubble at Walt Disney World was only meant to be a temporary solution for the league to finish the 2019-20 campaign amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.

While it seems to be going smoothly so far, National Basketball Players Association executive director Michele Roberts knows that the bubble may be the only legitimate way for the league to hold next season, too.

"If tomorrow looks like today, I don't know how we say we can do it differently," Roberts said. "If tomorrow looks like today, and today we all acknowledge—and this is not Michele talking, this is the league, together with the PA and our respective experts saying, 'This is the way to do it'—then that's going to have to be the way to do it."

The coronavirus pandemic is still raging throughout the United States, more than six months after it first reached the country.

There were more than 4.3 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus in the country as of Tuesday night, according to The New York Times, and nearly 150,000 deaths attributed to it. The country has averaged more than 65,000 new cases each day over the past week, and more than 1,000 deaths each day.

The NBA has said that it hopes to start the 2020-21 season in December, though nothing is set in stone.

NEW YORK—CONCACAF's announcement Monday afternoon that it had settled on a new format and schedule for its 2022 World Cup qualifying tournament was welcome news for United States men's national team fans, many who have been wondering since the global coronavirus pandemic hit almost six months ago when the USMNT might be able to take the field again.

The plan would see the Americans play friendly matches this fall, possibly in Europe, where a pair of exhibitions slated for March were cancelled because of the health crisis. The semi-finals of the inaugural Nations League would follow in March 2021, with the U.S. taking on Honduras for a spot in the title game. Qualifying would then kick off in June

USMNT's World Cup qualifying sked appears set

of next year and run through March of 2022.

Sounds great in theory. "It's good to have certainty," national team coach Gregg Berhalter told U.S. Soccer's website after the news broke. "The certainty helps us plan, regardless of what the outcome was going to be with the format. We will be prepared now that we know what things look like going forward."

Do we, though? Can anyone, especially in this part of the world, say with any certainty at all that bringing large groups of people together for international sporting events will actually be feasible just a few short months from now?

If Major League Baseball's struggle to get its COVID-cursed 2020 season off the ground is any indication,

CONCACAF's plan is exceedingly ambitious, to put it kindly. For while the National Women's Soccer League and Major League Soccer have set the standard for all other North American sports circuits to follow with their mostly successful restarts inside of strictly regulated bubbles (with the NBA and NHL set to follow suit starting this week), baseball has its teams traveling from city to city to play games in empty stadiums. Just days into its restart, a flurry of games have been postponed after no fewer than nine members of the Baltimore Orioles tested positive for the novel coronavirus, setting off a league-wide panic.

MLB's problems don't bode well for the NFL, which

has followed the federal government's lead by more or less pretending that the pandemic doesn't exist. It still intends to play its full season as usual, with fans in attendance where local authorities will allow it.

Same goes for many college football programs.

At some point, though, the NFL is destined to get the same wakeup call that baseball received this week, the same depressing reminder that the virus—and the virus alone—will dictate how or when a normal sports calendar can resume. Right now, COVID-19 remains in total control.

Unless or until the United States gets a handle on its avalanche of cases, staging big-time sports outside of a bubble probably isn't all that practical.

International games present even greater challenges. Many countries remain closed. Few are willing to welcome Americans right now.

The Toronto Blue Jays will be based in Buffalo this season after the Canadian government refused to allow it and its U.S.-based opponents to travel freely across the border. Other nations require visitors to quarantine for up to two weeks upon arrival. None of those restrictions figures to disappear soon. So sure, go make some plans, CONCACAF. It's nice to have a framework based on how things could look like beginning this fall. But that's all it is: a rough outline projecting a best-case scenario.

The good news is the schedule has some built-in flexibility. The final "octagonal" round

of qualifying isn't slated to start for almost a year. If necessary, the Nations League, which nobody cared about to begin with, can be scrapped to free up additional fixture dates. The three teams that will round out the field of eight—the U.S., Mexico Costa Rica, Jamaica and Honduras have already advanced to the final phase—can be determined by the FIFA ranking if having international matches this year proves impossible.

"We don't want to put any players at risk, but we want to play in the October and November windows," Berhalter said before seeming to acknowledge that those two aims might well be at odds with each other. "Given what the world has been confronted with the last few months, it goes without saying that the priority is doing it in a safe way."

Bad blood between Dodgers, Astros still boiling



HOUSTON
(AP)—The Houston Astros are trying to put their sign-stealing scandal behind them.

It seems as if the Los Angeles Dodgers have their own thoughts on the matter.

Benches cleared Tuesday night during the Dodgers' 5-2 victory over the Astros in the first game between the teams since it was revealed that Houston stole signs en route to a 2017 World Series championship that came at Los Angeles' expense.

The fracas occurred after Dodgers reliever Joe Kelly threw high-and-tight pitches to Astros stars Alex Bregman and Carlos Correa in the sixth inning.

"Balls get away sometimes but not that many in the big leagues," Houston manager Dusty Baker said. "When you throw a 3-0 fastball over a guy's head, you're flirting with ending his career."

The Dodgers had a 5-2 lead after a five-run fifth when Kelly, who was with Boston in 2017 and also faced Houston that postseason, threw behind Bregman for ball four. Bregman grimaced after jumping to avoid being hit, then trotted to first base.

There were two outs in the inning when Kelly threw an errant breaking ball over Correa's head. Correa, who homered and finished with three hits, took off his batting helmet and stared Kelly down before continuing the at-bat.

Kelly struck out Correa, then stuck out his tongue and made a face in his direction. Correa started walking toward him and the players exchanged words, prompting the benches to clear in the first such incident of this pandemic-delayed season. There was plenty of yelling and crowding—outlawed as MLB tries to play a 60-game season amid the pandemic—but there was no pushing or punches thrown.

Baker said things really got out of hand because of something he said Kelly told Correa after the strikeout.

"What really enraged everybody ... is when he told him: 'Nice swing (expletive),' " Baker said. "What are you supposed to do then?"

Baker was asked if the Astros said anything to provoke Kelly.

"We didn't say anything," he said. "We don't start nothing. But we don't take nothing either."

Kelly denied that he purposely threw at the Astros. He was asked if there was any added motivation Tuesday since his Red Sox team lost to Houston in the AL Division Series in 2017.



"No. When I was with the Red Sox, we beat them in '18," he said.

Rays 5, Braves 2

Yoshi Tsutsugo hit a two-run single during a five-run third inning, and Tampa Bay beat Atlanta for its fourth straight win.

Yonny Chirinos pitched four effective innings for Tampa Bay after missing part of summer camp following a positive coronavirus test. He allowed one run and four hits.

Pete Fairbanks (1-0) struck out three during a perfect fifth. Oliver Drake, the fifth Tampa Bay reliever, worked the ninth for his second save.

The Rays loaded the bases in the third on three walks, and then chased Kyle Wright (0-1) with three consecutive two-out hits.

Diamondbacks 4, Rangers 1

Merrill Kelly took a no-hitter into the seventh inning before giving up a home run as Arizona beat Texas.

Rougned Odor's one-out homer in the seventh was the first of three hits off Kelly (1-0), who struck out seven and walked one in 7 2/3 innings.

After winning the season opener in their new \$1.2 billion stadium with a retractable roof, the Rangers have lost three in a row. They are last in the majors with a .156 team batting average and only six runs.

Archie Bradley worked a

perfect ninth for his first save.

Blue Jays 5, Nationals 1

The reigning World Series champions dropped to 1-4 in the pandemic-shortened season with a 5-1 loss to Toronto that included two outfielders colliding on a homer by Toronto's Vladimir Guerrero Jr., two errors by Starlin Castro that led to three unearned runs, and just one hit for Washington after the third inning.

Washington has lost three consecutive games—scoring a grand total of four runs—which looms larger when there are only 60 games to play.

Former Nationals pitcher Tanner Roark (1-0) got a win in his Blue Jays debut, allowing one run and three hits in five innings.

Twins 6, Cardinals 3

Josh Donaldson homered and drove in two runs in his Target Field debut with Minnesota, Jorge Polanco hit a two-run shot and the Twins beat St. Louis.

Homer Bailey (1-0) pitched five innings in his first start for the Twins, allowing a two-run homer to Tyler O'Neill in the fifth.

Cardinals starter Carlos Martínez (0-1) was pulled after 3 2/3 innings, when the homer by Donaldson ended his night. Polanco's drive capped a five-run second for the Twins, with Max Kepler pitching in an RBI single and Donaldson contributing a sac-

rifice fly.

Indians 4, White Sox 3, Game 1

Francisco Lindor and Bradley Zimmer each homered and drove in two runs, propelling the Cleveland past Chicago in the first game of a doubleheader.

Aaron Civale (1-0) struck out a career-high nine and allowed two runs over six innings in his first start of the season. Brad Hand gave up an RBI single to Yasmani Grandal in the ninth before picking up his second save for the Indians, who never trailed.

Lindor hit a two-run homer in the first inning and Zimmer had a solo shot in the second as Cleveland took a 3-0 lead off Dylan Cease (0-1).

Indians 5, White Sox 3, Game 2

Carlos Santana hit a three-run homer, Oscar Mercado had a two-run single and Cleveland competed a doubleheader sweep of Chicago.

Santana's first inning blast helped spoil the return of White Sox pitcher Carlos Rodón (0-1) from Tommy John surgery. The left-hander gave up five runs in 3 2/3 innings in his first appearance since May 1, 2019.

Mercado drove in Franmil Reyes and Domingo Santana in the fourth, extending Cleveland's lead to 5-1. James McCann hit a solo homer for Chicago in the second, and Jose

Abreu added another in the sixth off Adam Plutko (1-0).

Tigers 4, Royals 3

Jonathan Schoop and Christian Stewart each hit a two-run homer in the third inning to lift Detroit over Kansas City.

Whit Merrifield hit a three-run shot in the top of the third for Kansas City, but the Tigers answered quickly and held on from there. Tyler Alexander (1-0) and four other relievers kept the Royals scoreless for the final six innings, with Joe Jimenez pitching the ninth for his third save.

Kansas City starter Kyle Zimmer pitched two scoreless innings, then hit JaCoby Jones with a pitch to start the Detroit third. Tyler Zuber (0-1) relieved and allowed the homers to Schoop and Stewart.

Cubs 8, Reds 5

Javier Báez homered twice, doubled and scored on a deft dive to the plate, Alec Mills went six solid innings, and the Cubs extended their opening surge.

Chicago has won four of its first five games, scoring first in each one. Jason Kipnis' triple—Shogo Akiyama lost it in the sun—got the Cubs going again.

Mills (1-0) added to Chicago's stretch of impressive starts, holding the Reds to two hits in six innings. Chicago's starters have a 1.80 ERA and a .131 opponent batting average this season.

Benches clear after Los Angeles Dodgers relief pitcher Joe Kelly threw high-and-tight pitches to Astros stars Alex Bregman and Carlos Correa in the sixth inning of a baseball game Tuesday, July 28, 2020, in Houston.

The Reds got two-run homers by Nick Castellanos—his first since signing a \$64 million deal—and Freddy Galvis but fell to 1-4, tied for the worst start in the majors.

Cody Reed (0-1) allowed two runs in the fifth after relieving starter Tyler Mahle.

Pirates 8, Brewers 6

Adam Frazier hit a tiebreaking two-run homer in the eighth inning and Pittsburgh rallied past Milwaukee.

A day after blowing a four-run lead in the ninth in what became an 11-inning loss, Pittsburgh delivered a bit of payback thanks to a shaky performance by the Milwaukee bullpen.

Cole Tucker went 2 for 4 for the Pirates, including a double leading off the eighth against Bobby Wahl (0-1). With one out and Tucker on third, Frazier sent the second pitch he saw from Wahl halfway up one of the tarps covering the seats in right field at empty PNC Park.

Angels 10, Mariners 2

Anthony Rendon hit a two-run homer and reached base three times in his Angels debut, and Albert Pujols added his 657th career homer in Los Angeles' victory over the Seattle Mariners.

Rendon's homer to left field in the eighth inning brought home Mike Trout and capped an encouraging home opener for the Angels, who got their second win after losing three of four in Oakland to start the shortened season.

Max Stassi hit a three-run homer, Shohei Ohtani had a long RBI double and Justin Upton drove in two runs as the Halos won their home opener for only the second time in eight years.

Mets 8, Red Sox 3

J.D. Davis banged a two-run homer off the Pesky Pole, and left-hander David Peterson pitched 5 2/3 innings to win his major league debut and lead the New York Mets to a victory over the Boston Red Sox.

The Mets swept the two-game series and sent the Red Sox to their fourth consecutive loss. The teams now move to New York for another two games at Citi Field.

Peterson allowed two runs on seven hits and two walks, striking out three on the day he was called up from the team's alternate training site.

Bosa gets \$135 million extension with Chargers



C O S T A
MESA, Calif.
(A P) — De-

fensive end Joey Bosa has agreed to a contract extension that will make him the highest-paid defensive player in the NFL.

Two people familiar with the deal said the five-year extension is worth \$135 million, which includes \$78 million guaranteed at signing and \$102 million overall. The people spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Tuesday night because the contract has not been finalized. ESPN was the first to report on the deal.

The deal eclipses the five-year, \$125-million extension that Cleveland's Myles Garrett signed two weeks ago. That contract included \$100 million guaranteed for Garrett, a defensive end who was the top pick in 2017.

The Chargers confirmed Bosa has agreed to the extension but did not disclose financial terms.

Bosa was entering the fifth and final season of his rookie contract. There was some thought that he would hold out if an agreement had not been reached, but he reported to camp on Tuesday.

General manager Tom Telesco said on Monday that the Chargers were in a good

position with salary cap flexibility to get extensions done. The players' union had Los Angeles with \$20.38 million in space, which was in the top 10 in the league, before Bosa's extension.

The website Over the Cap also estimated that the Chargers would have the second-most cap space going into 2021, even if there is a reduction in how much teams can spend because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The 6-foot-5, 280-pound Bosa was the third overall pick in the 2016 draft and has been selected to two Pro Bowls. He tied for second in the AFC last season with 11.5 sacks and has double-digit sacks in three of his four seasons. He was third among defensive ends and second in the AFC with 60 tackles, including 16 for loss. Bosa also had 25 quarterback hits and forced a fumble.

Last year, Bosa became the first Charger since Kevin Burnett in 2010 to record three straight multi-sack games.

Bosa's extension also prevents the Chargers from having a messy holdout situation for the second straight season. Running back Melvin Gordon didn't report until the fourth week of the regular season last year. Gordon signed with Denver during the offseason.



AP
In this undated file photo, Eli Manning (10) of the New York Giants is sacked by Joey Bosa (99) of the Los Angeles Chargers during the first quarter of an NFL game at MetLife Stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey.

Arians comfortable coaching Brady, Bucs

In Florida, Bruce Arians didn't give much thought to the prospect of opting out of trying to help Tom Brady win a Super Bowl with the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The 67-year-old whose aggressive offensive philosophy is dubbed "no risk it, no biscuit" is one of the oldest head coaches in the NFL, as well as a cancer survivor who once retired because of health concerns.

He's among millions in a category considered vulnerable to the novel coronavirus, yet he's eager to work through the pandemic. With a goal of

helping Brady and a mostly young Buccaneers roster end the league's second-longest playoff drought and hoist the Lombardi Trophy.

At 68, Seattle's Pete Carroll and New England's Bill Belichick are the only head coaches who are older.

"There was never a doubt I was going to coach, especially once I'd seen the protocols in place," Arians said Tuesday, adding he plans to wear a mask and shield on the field and "coach like I've always coached."

"Whether it was Tom or whoever the quarterback would be, I'm going to get ex-

cited. I really like our ballclub and hope—knock on wood—we can stay healthy and do the things we want to do," Arians added. "Having Tom adds to the excitement, obviously, but I would have been all in either way."

The Bucs as an organization have the second-worst winning percentage of any franchise among the four major professional sports. They haven't made the playoffs for 12 consecutive seasons and haven't won a postseason game since their 2002 Super Bowl-winning run.

With Brady replacing talented but mistake-prone Ja-

meis Winston at quarterback, expectations are soaring.

There's a lot of work to be done, especially with teams unable to conduct OTAs and offseason conditioning programs due to the pandemic.

"You would hope we would have had spring practice, so all of them—especially the younger players—could get over the awe of Tom Brady walking into the locker. But we'll get through that, I think, within a week," Arians said.

Brady, who turns 43 next Monday, signed a two-year, fully guaranteed \$50 million contract in free agency after appearing in nine Super Bowls—winning six—over 20 seasons with the Patriots.

The Bucs also added the quarterback's favorite target, Rob Gronkowski, to an already exceptional group of receivers and tight ends. Tampa Bay reinforced a commitment to help Brady be successful by drafting offensive tackle Tristan Wirfs and retaining three key members of an emerging defense.

CHALLENGE

From Page 20

Abragan, Malou Carlos, Rommel Buenaflor, and Raymund Tolentino in the 100-mile race, Eric Abragan, Florence Antonio, and Buboy Aguilar in the 30-mile swim, and Willy Barbo and Mark Isip in the 300-mile bike. Ricky Castro, who helped coordinate the Go The Distance Challenge with CNMI participants, said about 98% of the around 40 Saipan participants

completed and some even exceeded the distance required in their respective events.

Bernardo finished her's last Monday and although she also reached her goal early, it was not a walk in the park, especially for a runner like her, who is used to giving up easily to challenges.

"Every day was a battle—mind over body. But I made it because of my running buddies (Arlene Baguino, Jerin Alladin, and Soriano), who

encouraged me to accept this challenge," said Bernardo, who alternately runs along the pathway in Beach Road and at the Oleai Sports Complex's track oval.

"This is definitely not my last. I want to continue running to stay active and healthy. I may not be fast, but I will get there. Cheers to more running!" Bernardo said.

Buenaflor was also an early finisher, completing the 100-mile run in nine days to give

himself a belated birthday gift.

"My first target was to finish the race on my birthday, July 11, but I missed it because of schedule challenges," said Buenaflor, who was not able to run every day and started to hit the road around 6pm.

The New York marathon participant had his longest run on his birthday though—a 20-plus mile course—which he completed in 4:14:47. He ran from the American Memorial Park to the former FEBC in

Marpi, headed to Beach Road for a turnaround point across the Marianas Visitors Authority's office in San Jose, and returned to AMP. Buenaflor then took a rest for two days after his birthday run and then completed the required distance last July 14 after running

a little over seven miles.

Buenaflor hopes that the Go The Distance Challenge will inspire more runners, bikers, swimmers, and even those not active in sports, to go out and log some miles, especially at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The pathway along Beach Road is the favorite route of runners who joined the Go The Distance Challenge.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Participants in the 100-mile run of the Go The Distance Challenge gather for a photo after their run at the Oleai Sports Complex.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Manny Sitchon takes a selfie after his lunchbreak swim in the waters off Civic Center in Susupe.



Zion could play, AD may miss reopening

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Saipan Tribune Sports

Bad blood between Dodgers, Astros still boiling

PAGE 18



20 THURSDAY, JULY 30, 2020

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

SAIPAN BETS FINISH VIRTUAL RACES

Challenge completed!

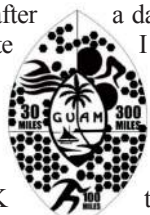
By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mission accomplished for Saipan residents who participated in the Go The Distance Challenge.

Veteran triathlete Manny Sitchon led the finishers list in the virtual races organized by Urban Fitness Guam after completing his “Ultimate Challenge,” which involved a 30-mile swim, 300-mile bike, and 100-mile run, last Sunday.

“I thought I have 5K run left, but I re-counted by distance and found out I am done with the challenge last weekend. It’s perfect timing since it’s been raining this week, making it a bit more difficult to run or bike,” said Sitchon.

Though he completed the challenge with a nearly a full week to spare (participants must meet the distance of their respective events by the end of the month to complete the challenge), Sitchon admitted there were some hurdles along the way.



GO THE DISTANCE CHALLENGE

“The most challenging part was the swim leg because I had to swim at least one mile a day and most of the time, I can only do that during my lunch break from work. There were times that I could not swim on lunch break because the tide was low, so I needed to make adjustments with my schedule,” Sitchon said.

The Tagaman and XTER-RA Saipan veteran added that the weather in the last two weeks have been challenging, especially when there were lightning and he felt it’s unsafe to swim in the open water.

Besides Sitchon, other Saipan finishers in the virtual event were Jean Bernardo, Roxanne Soriano, Sharon

See CHALLENGE on Page 19



Manny Sitchon, left, and Rommel Buenaflor, are among the early finishers of the virtual Go The Distance Challenge. **CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS**



PGC postpones general assembly

By **ROSELYN B. MONROYO**
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REPORTER

The Pacific Games Council’s Executive Board has decided to push back the general assembly set for November on Saipan due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We have assessed that travel restrictions are unlikely to ease in time to bring representatives of all of our member countries together at that time,” said PGC chief executive officer Andrew Minogue.

The decision came after the board, led by president Vidya Lakhan, had a virtual meeting last Monday to discuss developments in the 2023 Pacific Games and the next Pacific Mini Games that the CNMI is scheduled to host. With the general assembly postponed, Minogue added that they are

looking to meet on Saipan next year.

Originally, the 25-member nations of the PGC were supposed to discuss the sports to be played in the Pacific Mini Games, which is slated next year, but has been pushed back, too due to the pandemic.

Initially, the CNMI is offering six sports—athletics, baseball, badminton, golf, triathlon, and beach volleyball. However, tennis and weightlifting and even canoe may also be considered to the calendar of events for the Mini Games. As for the dates, though the host country is looking at 2022, there is no definite schedule yet.

“We are still working with the governor (Ralph DLG Torres) and NMSA (Northern Marianas Sports Association) on setting new dates for the Mini Games,” Minogue said.



PACIFIC GAMES COUNCIL
Pacific Games Council president Vidya Lakhan leads the PGC Executive Board virtual meeting held last Monday.